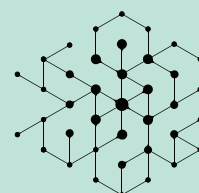


Independent Producers and a changing RTÉ



A vision for how the independent production sector can be a driver of change and transparency to develop RTÉ as a national publisher/broadcaster fit for the challenges of the 21st century and delivering for audiences in a creative, cost-efficient manner



**Screen
Producers
Ireland**

Introduction

Screen Producers Ireland (SPI) represents independent film and TV production companies in Ireland. The audiovisual production sector is at the centre of the creative industries in Ireland and has considerable growth prospects and employment potential. It makes a profound contribution to the country's cultural life and democratic values. To remain domestically and globally competitive, it needs market opportunities and adequate public funding as well as access to world-class creative talent and technical skills and facilities.

SPI's member companies have a closely interactive and symbiotic relationship with RTÉ, Ireland's main English language national broadcaster. This is a vital partnership in meeting the country's public service needs. Together RTÉ and independent producers make a significant contribution to the total television, film and animation output that is produced in this country.



Consideration of future options for RTÉ

As potential new operating models for RTÉ are being considered, it is timely for the independent production sector to outline its view of how independent television, film, animation and digital production should be commissioned by RTÉ from our sector in the future.

Strong public sector broadcasters, commissioning independently produced content on a year-round basis, are essential for the successful development of the sector. Through its external commissioning process, RTÉ has been a key player over many years in the development of a creative industry spanning producers, writers, directors, presenters, documentary makers, cast and crew in Ireland. The careers of some of Ireland's most prolific creative talent and technical skills providers have been nurtured by our broadcasters.

Through the Government's Audiovisual Action Plan (2018), Irish public policy has sought to grow the television, film and animation sector to over 24,000 full time equivalent jobs, with a gross value added of nearly €1.4 billion over ten years: [audiovisual-action-plan.pdf\(creativeireland.gov.ie\)](https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/audovisual-action-plan.pdf).

SPI also has an ambitious vision for growth. We see ourselves as a key partner for RTÉ, and as an organisation of over 200 member companies, represented in every county in the country, which is helping the Government to deliver on its objective of a vibrant cultural and creative industries sector.

Producers have a critical role to play in the change process which is now required. In putting forward our proposals, we are taking full account of the reports which were published recently on RTÉ's governance and funding as well as RTÉ's own strategic review, "A new Direction for RTÉ". Responding to the latter, SPI welcomed RTÉ's announcement of increased investment in independent production through its plan to increase the total value of independent commissions by up to 50% by 2028. We considered, however, that this strategy lacked the detail and ambition needed to plan effectively for a rapidly changing audiovisual production and distribution landscape.



An ambitious hybrid-production commissioning model

SPI believes that the time has come for a new model of partnership between RTÉ and our member companies. We propose that RTÉ evolves towards a hybrid-production model for all its original programming, excluding news and current affairs, by 2030.

In reaching this view, SPI has based itself on independent research and evaluation which it commissioned. We have explored in depth the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing our sector. We also took into account the deliberations on the future funding and governance models for RTÉ.

Among the options we looked at were:

- (i) no change in the status quo;
- (ii) evolution towards a 50% increase in commissioning spend by 2028;

(iii) evolution towards a 100% outsourced production model by 2030; or

(iv) evolution towards a 100% outsourced (excluding news and current affairs) hybrid-production model by 2030.

SPI believes that the fourth option is the one most likely to achieve public policy objectives and a sustainable operating model for RTÉ. We note, for example, that the genre of children's TV production has been operating successfully on the basis of a 100% outsourced commissioning approach. This approach will facilitate a smooth transition to new arrangements which will guarantee an effective, agile and responsive English language public service broadcaster into the future. It will also ensure that RTÉ, an organisation which has been given various additional functions over the years, stays focused on its core activities of TV and radio broadcasting.



Other measures needed

Multiannual funding for RTÉ:

The hybrid-production commissioning model needs to be underpinned by secure multiannual funding for RTÉ. SPI's position on future funding for RTÉ is that a sustainable, multiannual funding model is required as a matter of urgency. We endorse the recommendation of the Future of Media Commission (FOMC) report that this be delivered through direct Exchequer funding. We believe furthermore that such funding should be delivered in at least four-year tranches, as recommended by the FOMC report, and that it be put outside the electoral cycle.

The Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 made a start in amending the Broadcasting Act 2009. Further legislative changes will need to be agreed, and enacted, as the basis for a new hybrid-production commissioning model. The current provisions on independent production for RTÉ in the Broadcasting Act (2009) will need to be amended. These changes will need to be coupled with multiannual security of funding for RTÉ.

Industry readiness

Steps will be needed to ensure that the audiovisual industry is ready to leverage resources for its own development, based on the security implicit in a hybrid-production commissioning model. Moving towards the latter model will require input and coordination between the independent production sector, RTÉ and State agencies, in particular Coimisiún na Meán, Screen Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

There will be significant training and development needs. Some of the training needs were outlined in the Screen Ireland report, "The Skills Challenge for the Screen Sector in Ireland 2023". As regards wider development, Enterprise Ireland has recognised the potential for growth. With more funding in the independent production sector, there will be opportunities to support the development of audiovisual production companies of various sizes. Not all companies will want to scale up, but for those who do, it would be beneficial to pursue an industry-specific approach including expert training programmes. An industry-

led approach is already helping to develop the animation and digital sector.

SPI and its member companies will continue to work with Enterprise Ireland and other State Agencies to develop the sector to its full potential and to prepare it for a hybrid-production commissioning model. Opportunities such as the development and creation of productions with significant intellectual property potential need to be developed.

Terms of Trade

In addition, there is a need to revise the terms on which the independent production sector does business with RTÉ. The Code of Fair Trading Practice which is subscribed to by independent producers and RTÉ has not been updated since 2011. The RTÉ / SPI Terms of Trade have not been updated since 2013. In the intervening years there has been a seismic shift in how media and screen content is funded and distributed. Major changes in intellectual property law have been enacted. This all needs to be acknowledged and practical conclusions need to be drawn. Significantly updated Terms of Trade have the potential to be a real catalyst for change, as experienced in the UK after Terms of Trade (and revisions to them) were introduced there.

Timeline

It will be important, furthermore, to agree a timeline for implementing the transition to an ambitious hybrid-production model. We propose that, in line with the FOMC Report, implementation should take place over a 7-year period. We could imagine, for example, a timeline which would initially agree the quantum and timeline for a new model and also the multiannual funding for RTÉ. With the necessary legislative changes introduced and the operational detail of the new model agreed, and new Terms of Trade also agreed, the independent production sector could tender over subsequent years for production output (aligned with other funders' deadlines). Over the same 7-year period, skills programmes and supports could be developed for independent production companies who wish to take advantage of the new opportunities and to scale up.



Quantum of RTÉ expenditure on independent production

There has been much debate recently about the scale of expenditure on independent production which is needed if the sector is to be in a position, on the one hand, to meet the evolving needs of RTÉ audiences and public service media in Ireland and, on the other, to grow its own capacity to respond to present and future challenges.

RTÉ, as we have said, is an extremely important partner for the independent production sector. It is a major source of funding for the production of audiovisual content in this country. The Government has made clear in a variety of reports and public policy statements that it envisages RTÉ commissioning steadily more content from the independent production sector/. RTÉ itself, which is a strong advocate for the independent production sector, has been equally clear that this is what it wishes to do.

RTÉ commissions its programmes from the sector through a competitive process. This means it is assured of achieving value in its expenditure of public money and diversity in terms of the creative talent, technical skills and the voices seen and heard on the broadcaster's programmes. Further value could be achieved by commissioning more content, as a NewERA¹ report has observed. The content produced by the independent sector, it should be noted, gets among the highest audience viewership and consequently attracts strong advertising revenue for RTÉ.

In addition to RTÉ funding, the independent producers of RTÉ-commissioned programmes are able to attract further significant investment from other sources. This demonstrates their business acumen, persistence and resilience as well as their ability to package and produce content and to raise funds outside Ireland (in many cases co-productions and licensing deals). It also shows the importance of a strong English language broadcaster on the one hand providing a platform for screening content and on the other giving assurance to potential other partners, including international partners, that the independent producers have the backing of that national broadcaster.

In overall terms, our sector has proven it has the capacity to increase its output significantly. The sector's historical output demonstrates that it would have the capacity to quickly scale up again to produce a larger volume of independent content for RTÉ.

Rather than proposing a percentage increase on current expenditure levels, however, SPI prefers a different approach. We have considered what programming could, or should, be outsourced to the independent sector.

Our proposal is that **RTÉ's hybrid-production model should outsource to the independent sector all audiovisual screen content excluding news and current affairs**. In our vision, RTÉ would retain its editorial independence, oversight and public service media function. It would work in partnership with the independent sector who would deliver this expanded production within a competitive and culturally diverse environment. This model would also ensure value for money, diversity and content excellence. There is, of course, keen competition among Ireland's independent producers, a factor which inherently promotes value for money and cost efficiency.

We note that our proposal is in line with comments made by Coimisiún na Meán:

"We believe that RTÉ should develop a strategy that finds the right balance between in-house and external commissions, regardless of the level of funding. [...] In this regard, we suggest RTÉ should be encouraged to reconsider whether there are more opportunities to be gained through more extensive use of the independent production market. We note that this area of expenditure took a very significant hit with RTÉ's cost-cutting measures between 2008 and 2011; and RTÉ has shared with us the analysis it undertook to compare costs between in-house and independent. We recognise the difficulties of comparison, but we suggest that, provided more significant outsourcing could be accompanied by commensurate reductions in fixed overhead costs, the flexibility offered by the independent sector could benefit RTÉ's overall financial and creative position in the medium term. We believe that a more thorough examination of the relative costs and potential benefits should be a priority arising from this review."

(Reference: Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (2018). 5-year review the funding of public service broadcasters)

Content development takes time, of course. In order to plan for future productions in a coherent way, both RTÉ and the independent production sector will need clarity on a stable and predictable multiannual funding model for RTÉ. We note that TG4 currently benefits from such a model.

1. NewERA (2014) *Review of RTÉ for the Department of Communications, Energy, and Natural Resources*

Conclusion

SPI believes that a hybrid-production model, under which RTÉ would outsource to the independent production sector by 2030 all its audiovisual screen content with the exception of news and current affairs, is a win for all the stakeholders.

First, audiences would be rewarded by distinctively Irish programming which they wish to watch.

Second, commissioning independent production companies would ensure creativity and original programming produced at a competitive cost.

Third, this model would enable RTÉ to continue to discharge its public service broadcaster responsibilities and to provide diverse, entertaining and informative content for the widest possible Irish and international audiences.

Fourth, a model involving the outsourcing of content production to independent producers would have the indirect benefit of allowing RTÉ management to:

- Reorganise RTÉ News and Current Affairs so as to enable the latter to prevail and prosper in a competitive future. This would involve utilizing emerging technologies, such as AI and VR, and other innovations, all underpinned by the highest standards of independent journalism;

- Undertake the root and branch review of all divisions within the organisation, examining all opportunities to generate income, with the ambition to become a smaller, leaner, more efficient national broadcaster enjoying full public confidence.

Our vision is for a wide range of production companies in Ireland (including companies of scale) who will continue to produce high quality programmes, develop intellectual property opportunities and produce world class screen content for Irish and international audiences.

We wish to see Ireland's independent production sector become the sector of choice, attracting people to work in a sustainable audiovisual industry and making a major contribution to the country's cultural, social and economic prosperity.

We put forward our vision in the spirit of ensuring that a transparent and orderly path can be mapped out for future cooperation between the independent production sector and RTÉ, taking into account their evolving roles as well as their interdependent futures.



APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION PROCESS AND MATRIC SCORING

Following on from RTÉ's stated objective of implementing a hybrid-production model, and arising from the analysis of the SWOT output from the SPI members and stakeholders (as listed below), four options for how much content production could be outsourced to the independent sector were considered:

1. RTÉ stays as is (Status Quo)
2. Evolve towards a 50% increase in commissioning spend by 2028 (proposed by RTÉ in A New Direction, 2023)
3. Evolve towards a 100% outsourced hybrid-production model by 2030
4. Evolve towards a hybrid-production model (excluding News & Current Affairs by 2030)

Each option was then considered against a series of criteria. They were then ranked in order of best fit for achieving the stated objective, and were risk rated against the

In order to ensure that all potential stakeholders and SPI members were consulted as the report and recommendations were developed, a sectoral list was devised.

The stakeholders consulted in this process included:

- members of the SPI Board,
- the membership of SPI through a consultative forum at the SPI AGM
- RTÉ
- Coimisiún na Meán

On foot of these consultations, the following were considered of significant importance pertaining to securing the future of RTÉ, the substantial development of the audiovisual sector in Ireland, and the potential future role of the independent production sector within RTÉ.

They are expressed as three criteria in the matrix:

1. Achieve Public Policy Objectives.
2. Achieve a Sustainable Operating Model for RTÉ
3. Achieve a Smooth Transition and Implementation Roadmap

These three criteria were then broken out into specific elements which addressed the issues raised during the consultation process.

Scoring of Matrix

Each criterion has a maximum score of 40 marks, divided into 4 elements of 10 marks each. The maximum total score of the three criteria is 120. These were then risk rated in terms of likelihood of success.

Indicative Scale:

- 0-14 = High Risk of Not Achieving Objective (Red Risk)
- 15-28 = Medium Risk of not Achieving Objectives (some indicators likely to be achieved - Orange Risk)
- 29-40 = Low Risk, Strong Likelihood of Meeting Objective (and satisfying majority of indicators - Green Risk)

OPTIONS MATRIX for HYBRID-PRODUCTION MODEL FOR RTE	RTÉ stays as is (Status Quo)	Evolve towards a 50% increase in commissioning spend by 2028 (proposed by RTE)	Evolve towards a 100% outsourced hybrid-production model by 2030	Evolve towards a hybrid-production model (excluding News & Current Affairs by 2030)
1. Achieve Public Policy Objectives	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
a. ensure editorial Independence is retained for RTE as the public broadcaster (possible 40 marks - 10 per element)	9	9	1	9
b. implement the Audiovisual Policy, Digital policy, growing the sector, creating certainty of pipeline etc.	1	5	9	9
c. implement economic objectives, attracting inward investment in general and for the AV sector in particular	1	5	9	9
d. implement third level education and training policies to foster graduates with transferrable creative industries skills	1	5	9	9
Criteria 1 Score	12	24	28	36
2. Achieve a sustainable operating model for RTE (possible 40 marks - 10 per element)	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK
a. opportunity to retain/develop audiences (platform, format, regional spread, age cohort, relevance/ear to the ground, EDI)	2	5	9	9
b. opportunity to develop programme content that is excellent in a national and international context	5	7	9	9
c. opportunity to obtain competitive pricing for producing original content, and ensure value for money	2	5	9	9
d. ability to achieve RTE's wider corporate objectives (excluding AV content provision)	4	5	9	9
Criteria 2 Score	13	22	36	36
3. Achieve a smooth Transition and Implementation Roadmap (possible 40 marks - 10 per element)	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
a. length of time/complexity to complete changes required	7	6	4	4
b. opportunity for RTE to plan coherently for their future with the IPS and other partners/attracting co-funding, sponsorship, advertising revenue & public funding	1	9	9	9
c. ability to implement an orderly change management programme for RTE, ensuring continuity of fair staff policies	5	5	5	5
d. potential to develop and/or scale the indigenous IPS in a strategic way; incl. develop new Terms of Trade, career development, multi-annual commissioning cycle	1	7	10	10
Criteria 3 Score	14	27	28	28
Total Score	39	73	92	100
Each criterion has a maximum score of 40 marks, divided into 4 elements of 10 marks each The maximum total score of the three criteria is 120.				
Indicative Scale				
0-14= High Risk of Not Achieving Objective				
15-28 = Medium Risk of not Achieving Objectives (some indicators likely to be achieved)				
29-40= Low Risk, Strong Likelihood of Meeting Objective (and satisfying majority of indicators)				

Explanation of criteria and scoring

Criterion 1. Achieve Public Policy Objectives

This criterion addresses government's public policy objectives, under 4 elements that are key to the role the audiovisual sector plays within the wider Irish social and economic context, and scores them in terms of how well each hybrid-production option addresses them.

- ensure editorial Independence is safeguarded for RTE and that RTE can achieve its public service objects as set out in the Broadcasting Act 2009
- implement government-approved strategies for the Creative Industries including the Audiovisual Action Plan & the Roadmap for the Digital Creative Industries
- implement economic objectives, attracting inward investment in general and for the AV sector in particular
- implement third level education and training policies to foster graduates with transferrable creative industries skills, and Screen Ireland's The Skills Challenge 2023

Criterion 2. "Achieve a sustainable operating model for RTE"

This criterion addresses four elements that are of importance towards achieving a sustainable operating model for the national broadcaster, and scores them in terms of how well each hybrid-production option addresses them.

- opportunity to retain/develop audiences (platform, format, regional spread, age cohort, relevance/ear to the ground, EDI)
- opportunity to develop programme content that is excellent in a national and international context

- c. opportunity to obtain competitive pricing for producing original content, and ensure value for money.
- d. opportunity to achieve RTÉ's wider corporate objectives (excluding AV content provision)

Criterion 3. Achieve a Smooth Transition and Implementation Roadmap

This criterion addresses, under four elements, how difficult it would be to transition to various levels of outsourcing by RTÉ to the IPS, and scores them in terms of how well each hybrid-production option addresses them.

- a. Length of time/complexity to complete changes required
- b. opportunity for RTÉ to plan coherently for their future with the IPS and other partners/attracting co-funding, sponsorship, advertising revenue & public funding
- c. ability to implement an orderly change management programme for RTÉ, ensuring continuity of fair staff policies ability to implement an orderly change management programme for RTÉ, ensuring continuity of fair staff policies
- d. potential to develop and/or scale the indigenous IPS in a strategic way; incl. develop new Terms of Trade, career development, multi-annual commissioning cycle

Summary scoring and optimal option

The optimal option and least risky in terms of achieving the 3 criteria, is:

“Evolve towards a hybrid-production model, excluding news and current affairs, by 2030”.

A. SIZE AND ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE SECTOR

Olsberg Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in the Republic of Ireland 2018

The audiovisual sector is a major contributor to the Irish economy, as well as being a creative and cultural contributor to Irish society. [The Olsberg Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in the Republic of Ireland](#), 2018 states that the audiovisual and radio sectors generated more than €1billion in Gross Value Added to the Irish Economy in 2016, of which €692million was attributable to the film, TV and animation sectors. The Report noted that almost 11,960 people were employed on a full time equivalent basis from direct, indirect and induced roles in the Film, TV, and animation sectors in 2016.

1.1.1. Gross Value Added

Gross Value Added (GVA) is a productivity metric that measures the contribution of the audiovisual sector to the Irish economy. GVA varies greatly within the various elements of audiovisual sector covered in this report from quite low in commercial radio to high in Film, TV and animation.

One of the main reasons for this difference is the contribution of independent and inward investment production of predominantly live action films and television programmes which has a high GVA.

Table 1 Gross Value Added in the audiovisual and radio sectors in Ireland (€m), 2016

	Film, TV and animation	Commercial advertising	Video games	Radio	Total
Direct	303.3	12.5	95.4	112.1	523.3
Indirect	273.5	6.0	30.6	56.5	366.7
Induced	115.2	2.7	17.7	24.4	159.9
Total	692.0	21.2	143.7	193.0	1,049.9

Source: Olsberg-SPI/Nordicity estimates based on data from RTE, BAI, CRAOL, Irish Times, Core Media, IFB, Imirt, industry surveys, company accounts, ONS, Indecon and CSO.

The audiovisual and radio sectors generated more than €1 billion in GVA for the Irish economy in 2016. Of this, €692 million was generated by the film, TV and animation sectors, with €303 million of this being direct impact GVA.

1.1.2. Employment

The audiovisual sector supports thousands of jobs in the Republic of Ireland and there is significant potential for further growth in the years ahead.

Table 2 Employment impact of the audiovisual and radio sectors in Ireland (FTEs), 2016

	Film, TV and animation	Commercial advertising	Video games	Radio	Total
Direct	7,070	270	1,450	1,770	10,560
Indirect	3,740	70	410	550	4,770
Induced	1,150	30	180	240	1,600
Total	11,960	370	2,040	2,560	16,930

Source: Olsberg-SPI/Nordicity estimates based on data from RTE, BAI, CRAOL, Irish Times, Core Media, IFB, Imirt, industry surveys, company accounts, ONS, Indecon and CSO.

The largest contribution to employment came from the film, TV, and animation sub-sector, which generated 11,960 FTEs of employment of which just over 7,000 was direct employment such as cast and crew.

B. PUBLIC POLICY AMBITION FOR THE SECTOR

In a speech made to the IPS in March 2023, President Michael D. Higgins, spoke about how ‘30 years ago 5 key unrelated policy decisions were made by government which resulted in the sector we see today’.

CAL Policy decisions which brought the sector of today and then preface the AAP below as the primary policy driver of the contemporary sector.

Investment by successive governments in grants, tax incentives, education and training, since the re-establishment in 1993, of the Irish Film Board, now Screen Ireland, is now beginning to demonstrate returns, with international recognition of Ireland's creative output.

SPI is exploring the potential policy interventions that could be introduced today to result in the transformative, positive growth of sector in Ireland for the next 30 years. One of the most important elements of the sector is a strong national broadcaster, which this document is calling for.

The Audiovisual Action Plan

Following on from the 2018 Olsberg Report, the Irish government approved Creative Ireland's Audiovisual Action Plan in June 2018 - [audiovisual-action-plan.pdf\(creativeireland.gov.ie\)](https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/~/media/2018/06/2018-06-20-audiovisual-action-plan.pdf)

The public policy ambition of the Audiovisual Action Plan is to grow the television, film, and animation sector to over 24,000 full time equivalents (FTEs) with a gross value added of nearly €1.4billion within 10 years. The aim of the Plan is to provide the necessary environment for Ireland to become a global hub for the production of television, film, drama and animation. This industry-wide, long-term plan is intended to provide a pathway making Ireland a leader in this sector.

Many public policy initiatives have been undertaken in the past three years to support and further the ambition of the Audiovisual Action Plan. These policy interventions have been integral to the upward trajectory and international recognition of the sector.

However, it is important in the context of this document to note that numerous reports have recommended reform of the RTÉ funding model to facilitate it becoming a contemporary national broadcaster, including most recently the FOMC. To date a number of these reports have not been delivered upon resulting in a statement of national policy at odds with a dysfunctional funding model for the national broadcaster.

C. UPWARD TRAJECTORY OF THE SECTOR

Public Sector Investment

In support of its own policy for the sector, the government provides significant, and in recent years growing financial and other support for audiovisual production through the key Irish public policy agencies, these are outlined below;

Consistent and innovative public sector support for the Irish screen sector is vital to retain the progress that has been made and maintain competitiveness with other regions across Europe and beyond. The UK recently implemented new further supports for independently produced productions.

The UK will provide an incentive entitled the "indie tax credit". The incentive which was announced in March 2024 will provide UK-qualifying film budgeted up to £15m with a tax relief of 40%.

This announcement came alongside an increase of 5% to the UK's existing incentive for visual effects in film and high-end TV, bringing it to 39% in relief and the removal of the 80% cap for visual effects cost in the audiovisual expenditure credit.

These recent developments in UK Audiovisual tax policy represent a significant threat to the Irish Independent production industry as producing both indigenous and incoming productions in Ireland will become much less competitive compared to the UK when these incentives are implemented in April 2025.

As the main national broadcaster in Ireland, RTÉ plays a pivotal role for the independent production sector, in that it provides year-round content production opportunities through its commissioning fund of c. €40million. As such, the future of RTÉ and the independent sector are inextricably linked, and it is of the utmost importance to SPI members that the future of RTÉ, its secure funding, and its new commissioning model, are both stable and clearly defined

INDUSTRY GROWTH CAPACITY

In 2018 the Government released the Audiovisual Action Plan 2018.¹ This ambitious document outlined the vision and plan for the Irish Audiovisual industry and committed to investing €200m in the Audiovisual sector over ten years through Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland. The plan was underpinned by the Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in the Republic of Ireland by Olsberg SPI with Nordicity² and the 2017 report “Strategy for the Development of Skills for the Audiovisual Industry in Ireland³”.

In the plan it was stated that:

“The Study found that the audiovisual sector supported nearly 14,370 full-time equivalents jobs in 2016; with total compensation for employees in these sectors reaching €661.2 million (direct, indirect and induced) and that the audiovisual sector generated a total of €857 million in gross value added to the Irish economy in 2016. It also provided valuable cultural exports with the ability to reach substantial global audiences which brings benefits to other industries such as the tourism sector. A large part of Ireland’s audiovisual sectors are global-facing and the consultants found that these sectors generated an estimated €191 million in export earnings for the Irish economy in 2016.”

The plan outlined a number of key actions which would promote and capacity in the industry, some of these included:

- Ownership of the implementation of this plan by a specified steering group
- the extension of the Section 481 film tax relief
- strategic review of feature film funding
- increase in funding to a wide range of areas of audiovisual production through the IFB (Now Screen Ireland),
- specific skills development work
- Regulatory reform
- Increased marketing of the sector

Since the publication of this report, there has been significant growth in the industry in its output and capacity. The progress report entitled “Implementation of the Audiovisual Action Plan 2021⁴” outlined a range of measures that were implemented in 2020 to protect the capacity of the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic including additional funding measures and jobs stimulus packages specifically for the industry.

¹ Audiovisual Action Plan, “Ireland as a Global hub for the production of Film, TV Drama and Animation”, 2018

² https://www.screenireland.ie/images/uploads/general/Olsberg_Report.pdf

³ https://www.screenireland.ie/images/uploads/general/AV_Skills_Strategy_Report.pdf

⁴ <https://assets.gov.ie/194034/da236395-c33c-4a28-bd51-baf9d536218d.pdf>

The report noted significant work completed to build capacity in the audiovisual industry including:

- the implementation steering group has been reconfigured and includes representatives from a range of departments and industry bodies.
- It also noted the extension of the regional film development uplift for an additional year, to continue to develop talent pools, crew and studio spaces in areas outside of Dublin. This incentive has since been removed and there is currently no targeted automatic tax incentive for regional productions however Screen Ireland does operate a fund of 3.5m for regional productions.
- A range of significant investment measures
- It outlines important skills development work including, education sector alignment with the industry, A skills needs analysis conducted by Screen Skills Ireland to identify skills gaps in the industry and address them.