



**An Roinn Cultúir,  
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta**  
Department of Culture,  
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

*First Progress Report on Implementation  
of the Audiovisual Action Plan*



## CONTENTS

Glossary.....	2
1 Abstract.....	3
2 Introduction .....	3
3 Summary of progress to date .....	5
4 Report on policy recommendations listed in the Audiovisual Action Plan.....	5
4.1 Oversight of Industry by Steering Group .....	5
4.2 Section 481 Film Tax Relief .....	6
4.2.1 <i>Conclusions on Section 481 Film Relief</i> .....	7
4.3 Strategic Review of Feature Film Funding .....	7
4.3.1 <i>Conclusions on Strategic Review of Feature Film Funding</i> .....	8
4.4 Funding .....	8
4.4.1 <i>Conclusions on Funding</i> .....	13
4.5 Skills Development.....	13
4.5.1 <i>Conclusions on Skills Development</i> .....	18
4.6 Regulatory Reform.....	19
4.6.1 <i>Conclusions on Regulatory Reforms</i> .....	21
4.7 Marketing.....	21
4.8 Other supports and reform.....	22
5 Other matters arising at the Audiovisual Steering Group meetings.....	24
6 Conclusion.....	25

## Glossary

AR/VR	Augmented Reality/ Virtual Reality
AVMSD	Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the EU legislation which governs EU-wide coordination of national legislation in the TV and on-demand markets
BAI	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
CMF	Canada Media Fund
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DBEI	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment
EFADs	European Film Agency Directors
ETB	Education and Training Board
IP	Intellectual Property
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
OSN Report	Olsberg SPI with Nordicity Report: Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in Ireland
RAGs	Regional Aid Guidelines
Regional Uplift	Regional Film Development Uplift
SLMRU	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
SME	Small to Medium sized Enterprise
Solas	Agency of the Department of Education and Skills with responsibility for funding, planning and co-ordinating Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland
VFX	Visual Effects
VoD	Video on demand
WRAP Fund	Western Regional Audiovisual Producers Fund

## 1 Abstract

The **Audiovisual Action Plan**<sup>1</sup> was launched by Minister Madigan in June 2018. This is an industry-wide, long-term plan, under the **Creative Ireland Programme**<sup>2</sup>, developed to support the Government's ambition to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of film, TV drama and animation. This report sets out actions to date on the key recommendations under the Plan.

## 2 Introduction

The Creative Ireland Programme is a five year initiative, from 2017 to 2022, which places creativity at the centre of public policy. The Audiovisual Action Plan is designed to deliver on the commitment in Pillar 4 to create an industry-wide plan to make Ireland a leader in the audiovisual sector and is intended to drive both increased investment and production across the sector. The Action Plan was generated from 3 key inputs: (1) the **Olsberg SPI with Nordicity** (OSN Report) of December 2017<sup>3</sup> which set out an economic analysis of the Irish audiovisual industry with policy recommendations; (2) a Media Production Workshop held at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham<sup>4</sup> which was attended by over 150 representatives of the industry; and (3) the **Strategy for the Development of Skills for the Audiovisual Industry in Ireland**<sup>5</sup> prepared by Crowe Howarth and jointly commissioned by Screen Ireland and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. The Audiovisual Action Plan sets out the Government's high-level, strategic priorities over the next ten years to develop a vibrant media production and audiovisual sector bringing new economic opportunities across Ireland, through increased Government support.

Ireland's audiovisual sector includes film, TV and animation, commercial advertising and video games. In 2016 the sector generated €857 million in gross value added to the Irish economy, together with an estimated €191 million in export earnings. The Audiovisual Action Plan seeks to implement policy recommendations in 8 key areas. In doing so, it is hoped that the number of full-time industry employees will increase to an estimated 24,000 and that the gross value of the sector will increase to nearly €1.4 billion.

---

<sup>1</sup> Audiovisual Action Plan: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/audiovisual-action-plan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Creative Ireland Programme: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/arts/creative-arts/creative-ireland-programme/>

<sup>3</sup> Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in the Republic of Ireland – a Report from Olsberg SPI with Nordicity (OSN): <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/economic-analysis-of-the-audiovisual-sector-in-the-republic-of-ireland.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Overview of Media Production Workshop:

<sup>5</sup> Strategy for the Development of Skills for the Audiovisual Industry in Ireland: [https://www.screenireland.ie/images/uploads/general/AV\\_Skills\\_Strategy\\_Report.pdf](https://www.screenireland.ie/images/uploads/general/AV_Skills_Strategy_Report.pdf)

The Audiovisual Action Plan Steering Group was established to oversee delivery on the actions set out in the Plan and will:-

- Oversee and provide direction to ensure the successful implementation of the Plan;
- Set priorities based on the recommendations in the Plan; and
- Identify and monitor risks to the implementation of the Plan.

The Steering Group is working to implement the eight policy recommendations which are listed in the Plan. The eight policy areas are:

- (1) Oversight of Industry by Steering Group
- (2) Section 481 Film Tax Relief
- (3) Strategic Review of Feature Film Funding
- (4) Funding
- (5) Skills Development
- (6) Regulatory Reform
- (7) Marketing
- (8) Other Supports and Reform

The Steering Group membership includes representatives from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Screen Ireland, the Department of Finance, the Department of Education and Skills, the Revenue Commissioners, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland. The Group has met on 8 occasions and has prepared this first Progress Report to the Minister showing achievements under the Action Plan and highlighting developments which have taken place to support the audiovisual Sector in Ireland.

In the weeks after the Audiovisual Action Plan was launched, the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published a ***Report on Development and Working Conditions in the Irish Film Industry***<sup>6</sup>. This report set out 11 specific conclusions and recommendations and shares the objectives of the Audiovisual Action Plan in seeking to develop the industry and to enhance the experience of all stakeholders in the sector, to promote growth and to see the continued expression of Ireland's creativity through the medium of film so that it might be enjoyed by a global audience. Those recommendations have also formed part of the considerations of the Steering Group.

---

6

[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_culture\\_heritage\\_and\\_the\\_gaeltacht/reports/2018/2018-07-12\\_development-and-working-conditions-in-the-irish-film-industry\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_culture_heritage_and_the_gaeltacht/reports/2018/2018-07-12_development-and-working-conditions-in-the-irish-film-industry_en.pdf)

### 3 Summary of progress to date

Progress has been made on all eight policy areas set out in the Plan. Much of the focus in the first year of the implementation period has been directed towards improvements in the Section 481 tax credit and the necessary various legislative changes.

Under the eight policy areas, key achievements in the first year of implementation include:

- Clear ownership of the Implementation Plan with cross-departmental and agency engagement;
- Extension of the Section 481 tax credit to 2024;
- Revision of Section 481 Regulations;
- Increase in funding to Screen Ireland which has led to increased investment in TV drama, skills development, support to visit markets and establishing ways to provide a stronger presence in key markets such as Los Angeles;
- Signing of the revised Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-production;
- Developments relating to reform of the TV Licence fee model;
- Introduction of the Regional Film Development Uplift;
- Development of new skills development courses and enhanced training and skills development opportunities as part of Section 481 revisions.

## 4 Report on policy recommendations listed in the Audiovisual Action Plan

### 4.1 Oversight of Industry by Steering Group

#### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.12**

The Steering Group established to oversee the delivery of the OSN Report will continue in existence to provide governance and direction in the implementation of the Audiovisual Action Plan.

A high level Steering Group has been set up to have oversight of the Audiovisual Action Plan. Membership of the Steering Group is comprised of the following departments and agencies involved in the industry:

- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;
- Department of Finance;
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment;
- Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation;

- Department of Education and Skills;
- The Revenue Commissioners;
- Screen Ireland;
- Broadcasting Authority of Ireland;
- IDA Ireland;
- Enterprise Ireland.

## 4.2 Section 481 Film Tax Relief

### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.16**

The Section 481 tax credit system is a vital part of the financial infrastructure of the audio-visual industry in Ireland. Section 481 is currently being reviewed in 2018 under the tax expenditure guidelines of the Department of Finance. In line with best practice for tax expenditures, Section 481 contains a sunset clause and it is due to expire at end-2020. A decision as to extension of the scheme will be signalled by the Minister for Finance, following this review process. The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is engaging with the Department of Finance in relation to this review including the operational and regulatory aspects of the tax credit and the matters raised by OSN. The Department is also engaged with the Revenue Commissioners on the administration of Section 481 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and achieves its objectives.

In advance of Budget 2018, the Department of Finance conducted a cost-benefit analysis of Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. That analysis acknowledged that the purpose of the S481 scheme is to contribute to the development of a successful and dynamic audiovisual industry in Ireland, contributing to the promotion of culture in the State and referred to as the “cultural dividend”. In Budget 2019, the Minister announced the extension of the relief to 31 December 2024. As Section 481 is a State aid, any modification to the scheme, including its extension, is subject to EU approval and that approval was received in July 2019. The scheme is now extended until 31 December 2024.

Section 26 of the Finance Act 2018 provided for the splitting of the certification process between the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The requirement for a producer company to apply for a Cultural certificate before commencement of Irish production allows for earlier engagement on the training and skills development requirement. The tax credit was also moved to a self-assessment basis to allow for the normal penalty and prosecution provisions for any claim that is subsequently proven to be incorrect. These changes were supported by new regulations, the Film Regulations 2019.

Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, as amended by the Finance Act 2018, now provides for the making of an application by a producer company directly to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for a certificate stating that the film is to be treated as a qualifying film for the purpose of Section 481. Applications were previously made directly to the Revenue Commissioners. An application for certification must be made in writing to the Minister at least 21 working days prior to the commencement of the Irish production.

As part of the growth strategy for the sector, a new provision, the Regional Film Development Uplift was provided for in Finance Act 2018. EU State aid rules necessitated EU approval and following receipt of that approval, the Film (Regional Film Development Uplift) (Amendment) Regulations 2019<sup>7</sup> were introduced in July 2019 to give effect to the measure.

#### 4.2.1 Conclusions on Section 481 Film Relief

The Audiovisual Action Plan recognises that the Section 481 tax credit system is a vital part of the financial infrastructure of the audiovisual industry in Ireland. Since the inception of the Audiovisual Action Plan, much of the focus of the Steering Group has been directed towards the measure. The commitments in the Audiovisual Action Plan are to:

- review Section 481 under the tax expenditure guidelines of the Department of Finance;
- signal a decision in respect of the extension of the scheme;
- have the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht engage with the Department of Finance in relation to operational and regulatory aspects of the tax credit; and
- have the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht engage with the Revenue Commissioners on the administration of Section 481.

These have all been delivered on since the plan was launched in June 2018. Given that Section 481 is a critical tool for the Irish audiovisual sector, it will continue to be kept under review by the Steering Group over the lifetime of the Audiovisual Action Plan.

### 4.3 Strategic Review of Feature Film Funding

#### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.16**

The name of Bord Scannán na hÉireann/ Irish Film Board changed to Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland on 18 June 2018. Screen Ireland will undertake a detailed study of state funding models in other countries, both within the EU and elsewhere. This review will examine how feature film agencies are funded, such as from public or non-public sources as well as from public service and other broadcasters. Screen Ireland will finalise this study in the first quarter of 2019 for consideration by the Steering Group.

Screen Ireland's Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 proposed a root and branch review of how feature film is funded in Ireland, including examination of alternative and innovative approaches and comparative practices in other EU countries and elsewhere. In February 2019, the European Audiovisual Observatory published a study, commissioned by the European Film Agency Directors (EFADs) (of which Screen Ireland is a member) and covering 31 countries (EU-28, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland)<sup>8</sup>. The aim of that study was to provide a comparative European overview of the audiovisual industry in 31 different countries as well as detailed analysis of national and regional

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/si/358/made/en/print>

<sup>8</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/european-works-mapping/16809333a5>



industries. The report sets out the range of available measures to promote European films and TV programmes and incorporates a contribution by Screen Ireland describing the Irish landscape in terms of financial obligations imposed on broadcasters, Video on Demand (VoD) providers and distributors; levies imposed on film and audiovisual stakeholders; quotas for European works on broadcasters and VoD providers; and the kind of prominence obligations imposed on VoD providers. The report is particularly useful in giving examples of how other EU Member States have addressed the funding and promotion of European works and is of particular relevance as Ireland considers how to implement the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive which was adopted by the European Council on 6 November 2018 and is expected to be implemented into Irish law before the end of 2020.

#### 4.3.1 Conclusions on Strategic Review of Feature Film Funding

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) is responsible for the transposition of the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). Following the conclusion of a public consultation earlier this year, preparatory work in respect of the transposition of the AVMSD is ongoing with Heads of Bill expected to be submitted to Government by the end of 2019. The implementation of the revised AVMSD comes at a time of significant change to the ecosystem for the production, distribution and viewing of audiovisual content. The traditional model of linear programming comprising real-time television services and broadcast scheduled programming is seeing increased competition from non-linear programming and online and mobile distribution and content. A report published by the European Audiovisual Observatory in October 2019 stated that 23 TV channels and 125 on-demand channels are operating from Ireland<sup>9</sup>. As well as changes in respect of quotas and prominence for European works, the revised AVMSD also provides scope for Member States to require broadcasters/on-demand providers to pay into national funds to support European film and television productions by means of a levy. DCCA is currently examining how these changes could be implemented in an Irish context.

#### 4.4 Funding

##### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.20 -22**

In April 2018, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht launched *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027*, which sets out the Government's objectives for capital investment in the sector. In line with the Creative Ireland Programme, the plan recognises that investment is critical for a vibrant media production sector and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth. The Plan is designed to help promote and celebrate Ireland as a centre of cultural excellence and a source of rich natural and built heritage. It sets out high-level, strategic capital priorities for the Department over the ten-year period including the development of a vibrant Media Production and Audiovisual sector, bringing new economic opportunities across Ireland, through increased Government support.

<sup>9</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/audiovisual-media-services-in-europe-market-insights/16809816d1>

The Plan incorporates an amount of €200m for investment in Media Production and the Audiovisual Industry through Screen Ireland.

Having regard to the Government's Audiovisual Action Plan, the additional funding in the sector will focus primarily on film production, High End TV drama and animation under the following headings:-

- (a) Co-Production funding to support the development and production of more projects
- (b) Development funding to increase the value of Irish productions in the marketplace by ensuring they are fully developed before entering production
- (c) A specific fund for the development of films, TV drama, and TV formats will be developed in consultation with the sector
- (d) Funding to encourage the production of new Irish TV drama content. In recent years, there has been very little Irish domestic TV Drama and new funding will allow Ireland to take its place in this growing international market as well as reflecting Ireland's cultural experience.
- (e) A Regional Production Fund aimed at assisting with the cost of filming outside of the Dublin and Wicklow regions. The recently announced production of George RR Martin's Nightflyers in Limerick was made possible by Screen Ireland and unlocks the potential of other regions to support high-end productions
- (f) Additional training of film workers and crew particularly in the regions.

The costs associated with some of the recommendations are estimated as follows:

- Co-Production Funding: cost estimated to be an additional €3 million per annum;
- Development Funding: cost estimated to be an additional €2 million per annum;

The cost of these two elements will be met within the increased Exchequer contribution for Screen Ireland as set out in Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027.

It is estimated that TV Drama Funding would cost an estimated €10m per annum which would generate co-production expenditure in Ireland of up to €50 million per annum.

A review of how Co-Production, Development, and TV Drama are funded will be considered by the Steering Group having regard to the additional funding provided to Screen Ireland, as well as funding which may be channelled through the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland as well as RTÉ's plans in this area. The BAI has already launched a new co-development fund worth €450,000 with the Canada Media Fund. Increased Government funding for Screen Ireland in recent years (18% from 2017 to 2019) will allow Screen Ireland to implement a number of the recommendations including skills development, support to visit markets, Irish branding at events and ways to provide a stronger presence in key markets such as Los Angeles. This will assist Screen Ireland in meeting the ambition set out in the Government's recently published Global Ireland 2025 plan.

In consultation with other stakeholders, Screen Ireland has begun work on creating a clear map of finance available to companies. Screen Ireland continues to engage with stakeholders in relation to project finance under existing supports in order to attract international audiovisual projects to Ireland.

The additional costs of filming outside of Dublin and funding these costs are also being addressed in western counties. The €2m WRAP Fund was launched in October 2017 as an initiative of the Western Development Commission and Galway Film Centre in association with the local authorities of Clare, Donegal, Galway City, Galway County, Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo and Údarás na Gaeltachta, to support film, television, animation and gaming industries in the region.

The Steering Group members will also seek input from relevant Departments in relation to both Games Prototype and Business Development Funding.

Co-production funding:

***Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027*** incorporates an amount of €200m for investment in Media Production and the Audiovisual Industry through Screen Ireland. In 2019, Screen Ireland saw an increase of over 11% in its total funding, rising from a figure of €18,022,000 in 2018 to a budget of €20,040,000 in 2019. As recently announced in Budget 2020, Screen Ireland will receive additional funding of €1m in 2020. This increased funding will be administered by Screen Ireland to deliver on strategic priorities under the Audiovisual Action Plan.

The Audiovisual Action Plan estimated that co-production funding would cost an additional €3 million per annum, with the cost to be met within the increased Exchequer contribution for Screen Ireland as set out in ***Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027***. The increases in the budget allocated to Screen Ireland should lead to an increase in the volume of film and TV co-productions being made in Ireland. To date in 2019, Screen Ireland is supporting the work of creative talent through their participation in 7 feature film co-productions in collaboration with creative talent across the world from countries such as Belgium, Luxembourg, Canada, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Development funding:

The Audiovisual Action Plan commits to primarily focusing the additional capital funding in the sector on film production, high-end TV drama and animation under a range of headings, including development funding to increase the value of Irish productions in the marketplace by ensuring they are fully developed before entering production. Development funding is anticipated to cost an additional €2 million per annum, with the cost to be met within the increased Exchequer contribution for Screen Ireland as set out in ***Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027***. In 2019, Screen Ireland aims to develop the quality of Irish creative talent in film making by supporting the development of feature film, feature documentaries, high-end TV drama and TV animation through development funding programmes and will aim to support up to 140 projects in this way by the end of 2019. To date in 2019 116 such projects have been supported. The BAI Canada Media Fund (CMF) co-development fund has allocated €435,000 since it was launched to support the development of 14 audiovisual projects covering drama, education, factual and animation content.

In 2017 Screen Ireland, TG4 and the BAI launched a scheme to support the development and the production of feature films in the Irish language. To date, €450,000 has been allocated through the Cine 4 scheme to support the development of such projects and production funding of over €7m has been allocated to 6 projects. The first, *Finky*, was premiered this year. In addition a new initiative aimed at developing a teenage drama in Irish has been launched.

## TV Drama:

It is estimated that TV Drama Funding would cost an estimated €10m per annum which would generate co-production expenditure in Ireland of up to €50 million per annum. In 2019, the funds directed to TV drama amounted to €5 million (Screen Ireland c. €2 million and BAI c. €3 million).

The Audiovisual Action Plan noted that there had been very little Irish domestic TV Drama in recent years. Given Ireland's considerable potential in this market both at home and abroad, Screen Ireland allocated enhanced funding and resources to TV drama production and has established a new production fund aimed at supporting high-end episodic TV drama with the potential to sell internationally. *Normal People* is the first large scale indigenous project that Screen Ireland is supporting with this fund. Others include *The South Westerlies*, produced by Deadpan Pictures and *Darklands*, produced by Parallel Films. The BAI is also channelling funding towards TV drama through the BAI Sound and Vision fund. The BAI has provided €1.5 million in funding for new TV drama series developed by Virgin Media since 2018. These projects (*Blood Series 1 and 2* and *Darklands*) were produced with VoD investment from the UK. The total production expenditure on these projects was over €10 million.

## Supports to attract and encourage audiovisual projects

Screen Ireland, as the national development agency for Irish film making and the Irish film, television and animation industry has a statutory remit to assist and encourage the making of film in the State and the development of the film industry in Ireland. It supports writers, directors and production companies by providing investment loans for the development, production and distribution of film, television and animation projects. It works in conjunction with the enterprise agencies to support the development of the film sector to make a substantial contribution to inward investment. It promotes Ireland as a location for international production by providing advice and support for international companies seeking to locate production activity to Ireland, organising inward and outward trade missions on an annual basis and working in partnership with EU counterparts on co-productions.

As articulated in ***Enterprise 2025: Renewed***, the Government takes a whole of enterprise perspective to support the full range of businesses in Ireland including the audiovisual sector. In terms of provision of business and advisory supports to indigenous local businesses, the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation (DBEI) in conjunction with its development agencies and offices, other Government departments and sectoral support bodies, has, over time, built a comprehensive suite of supports – which can be broadly categorised as information/awareness, advisory, financial, and supports for regional enterprise development. In June 2019, DBEI produced an '*Overview of Government Supports for Indigenous Business*'<sup>10</sup> which sets out the range of supports and services available to over 250,000 business enterprises in Ireland, across all sectors and activities. Chapter 5 of the document gives an overview of the sector-specific supports available to business including, the creative sector.

A key facet in seeking to deliver on the Government's ambition to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of film, TV drama and animation is Ireland's ability to attract additional

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Overview-of-Government-Supports-for-Indigenous-Business.html>

international productions from overseas, and particularly from the US market. The Audiovisual Action Plan provides that increased funding for Screen Ireland in recent years should allow it to implement initiatives to support this recommendation in providing a stronger presence in key markets such as Los Angeles. This corresponds with the ambition set out in the Government's **Global Ireland 2025** plan which, under the initiative '*Bringing our Culture and Heritage to the Wider World*' commits to boosting Screen Ireland's presence in Los Angeles. In September 2019, the Taoiseach led a two-day trade mission to Los Angeles which focused on growing Ireland's film and TV industry. In the course of that trade mission, Screen Ireland announced its intention to expand its presence in Los Angeles and work closely with the new Irish Consulate in Los Angeles. Strengthening the base in Los Angeles should support the mission for employment and turnover growth in the audiovisual sector by providing for the building and managing of relationships with major US studios and content producers, communicating the opportunities available in Ireland, and identifying upcoming, portable productions that could locate in Ireland.

#### Filming outside of Dublin and Wicklow regions:

A key challenge in promoting the audiovisual sector across Ireland is the additional costs of filming outside the key urban areas (and particularly the Dublin area). Measures are underway to address this imbalance in the hope of unlocking access to a wider variety of locations than presently exist and to develop skills and crews across regional locations in Ireland. This supports the **National Development Plan 2018 - 2027**<sup>11</sup> which aims to drive Ireland's long term economic, environmental and social progress across all parts of the country over the next decade.

In July 2019, the Film (Regional Film Development Uplift) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 were published giving effect to the Regional Film Development Uplift ("Regional Uplift") measure announced as part of Budget 2019. The measure was subject to EU State aid approval and on receipt of this approval, has commenced with effect from 17 July 2019.

This will contribute to the strategic aims of building the audiovisual industry in regions outside of the areas in which it is currently concentrated by providing for an additional tax credit (in addition to the standard 32% tax credit) to be made available to productions being substantially undertaken in "assisted regions". "Assisted regions" are areas designated as such under the Regional Aid Guidelines (RAGs) map. In addition, to qualify for the relief, producer companies will be required to show that training and skills development opportunities are provided to individuals habitually resident in the area and that such training will address a skills deficit in the area. The Regional Uplift will be available for 4 years with 5% additional tax credit available in 2019 and 2020, 3% in 2021, and 2% in 2022. The aid is to provide additional support to incentivise the development of the audiovisual sector in areas outside the current main production hubs which should ensure a more equal spread of production activity across the country and contribute towards stimulating the growth of audiovisual activity in new regions in Ireland.

---

<sup>11</sup><https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/19240/62af938dce404ed68380e268d7e9a5bb.pdf#page=1>

#### 4.4.1 Conclusions on Funding

The high level, strategic capital priorities for the sector will be delivered through the increased Exchequer contribution to Screen Ireland. Increased funding provided in 2018 and 2019 has witnessed increased output in TV Drama, skills development, support to visit markets and establishing ways to provide a stronger presence in key markets such as Los Angeles. Initiatives such as the WRAP fund and the Regional Uplift are addressing the additional costs of filming outside of the established film production regions in Ireland.

### 4.5 Skills Development

#### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.26 – 28**

Screen Ireland has put in place a sub-committee of the Board to cover training and skills and act on recommendations listed in both reports. Through this training advisory sub-committee, Screen Ireland has already commenced work on some of the recommendations including:

- business skills development,
- matching skills with production growth,
- greater alignment with third level sector and networking training.

During 2018, Screen Ireland/Screen Skills Ireland will appoint a training manager, undertake a skillsgap audit across live-action, animation and television productions sectors, and also consider accreditation models.

In 2018, the BAI is focusing on brokering relationships to enhance collaboration between the industry and the educational sector with a view to facilitate the alignment of educational provision with the industry needs.

The oversight of training and the alignment of education sector to the needs of the industry will be a standing item on the agenda of the Steering Committee (which will include representation from the Department of Education and Skills) tasked to oversee development of the Plan.

#### Business skills development

Screen Skills Ireland, which is the skills development division of Screen Ireland, has delivered the ‘Screen Leaders’ programme, a strategic company development programme for European audiovisual companies, for over 10 years. The programme is designed for company leaders working in film, television, animation, games, post-production, visual effects (VFX), facilities, sales, distribution and exhibition. It is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme<sup>12</sup> and focuses on strategic planning; the ability to implement strategic decisions; methodologies to align company culture to the strategic plan; development of organisational structure; and the skills to adapt to change, foster innovation, explore new and developing business models and build company value. ‘Screen Leaders’ enables participants to make informed strategic decisions which support the future

<sup>12</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/node\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/node_en)

growth of their companies. This programme focuses on the execution and implementation of company strategies and building industry leaders. To date, over 100 companies and over 200 company leaders across industry sectors such as film, television, animation, games, post-production, VFX, facilities, sales, distribution and exhibition have participated on the programme.

In 2019, Screen Skills Ireland also developed 3 new certified programmes in collaboration with Irish academic institutions: 'Creative Leadership' 'Advanced Producers' (both in partnership with Technological University (TU) Dublin) and 'Production Management for Animation' (in partnership with IADT Dun Laoghaire). The 'Creative Leadership' programme offers a Post Graduate Diploma at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), aimed at creative sectors like animation, games, VFX, and immersive technologies and is available to participants via Springboard+. This is an industry-focused programme, designed in collaboration with key animation, VFX, immersive technologies and games studios to build a talent pool of future leaders and support the sustainable growth of the creative industries. Its aim is to develop business and leadership skills amongst participants. 'Advanced Producing', a Post-Graduate Certificate at Level 9 on the NFQ is designed to address a range of skill areas such as the development process; financing; legal issues; budgeting and scheduling; production; post-production; and management skills. Its aim is to ensure producers are "market-ready" and equipped with key skills as identified by the industry, including a sound knowledge of development, the changing production and distribution landscape and skills in negotiation and management. The programme will also focus on negotiation skills; sales and distribution; festivals, markets and pitching and graduates of the programme will be equipped with the skills, confidence, and connections to operate successfully in the industry and in international markets. The 'Production Management for Animation' programme, a Post-Graduate Certificate at Level 9 on the NFQ will focus on developing skills to manage animation productions from concept development to final delivery. The programme will provide learners with a command of the practical management of industry standard digital animation productions, for primarily 2D animation pipelines but also covering 3D and VFX pipelines.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, Screen Skills Ireland delivered several short, continuous professional development (CPD) programmes in consultation with the industry and aimed at enhancing business and management skills for the screen sector. In November 2019, it launched a call for mentors for a new Mentoring Funding Scheme to commence in late 2019. This will offer screen professionals mentoring support at key stages in their career development that will encompass business, creative and/or technical mentoring.

In 2020, Screen Skills Ireland will collaborate with a European Partner, ACE Producers to deliver a new animation programme aimed at producers who seek to diversify and increase their knowledge of developing and producing feature film animation production for an international audience (cinema, broadcast or streaming). The programme will focus on the development process, co-producing, international distribution, audiences and business strategies.

Business skills courses are also delivered to the sector through the Skillnet programme (discussed in further detail below). In 2018-19 through the Animation Skillnet, Design Enterprise Skillnet and Greasán na Meán Skillnets over 150 participants engaged in programmes and events dealing with Business Skills, Project Management and Leadership to include programmes such as 'Business 101

for Creative Start-ups’, ‘Production Management’, ‘Business and Finance of Animation’ and ‘Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling’.

In terms of developing and commercialising IP, in 2018 and 2019, Screen Skills Ireland supported 6 Irish writers on placements in ‘writers’ rooms’ in Los Angeles and also ran a range of short CPD programmes on topics linked to IP development and commercialisation.

Enterprise Ireland delivers a suite of tailored leadership and management development programmes to support capability needs of its client companies. Programmes and offers are targeted at a cross-sectoral Enterprise Ireland client profile and are designed to encourage cross-sectoral peer-to-peer learning. Enterprise Ireland provides strategic programmes that create transformational business change, as well as flexible, short programmes addressing short-term business issues. Its Mentor Network provides client companies with access to highly experienced entrepreneurs and business leaders who offer practical guidance and support and assist business leaders in optimizing their growth potential.

#### Skills needs analysis and matching skills to production growth

Under the Audiovisual Action Plan, Screen Ireland sets out a commitment to appoint a training manager and undertake a skills-gap audit across live-action, animation and television productions sectors. In 2018, a training manager was appointed and a ‘Learning Needs Analysis Survey’ was undertaken, aimed at identifying future skills gaps and supporting ongoing professional development of the industry. Over 1,300 responses to the survey were received and the findings from that have fed into the development of courses offered by Screen Skills Ireland throughout 2019. In October 2019, a further skills needs analysis survey was conducted by Screen Skills Ireland to build on understanding of skills gaps in the industry and how best to address them. The findings of the survey (from over 1,200 responses) will be used to inform the development of future courses and the work of Screen Ireland in its role in relation to Section 481 Skills Development Plans. The high-level findings will also be made available publicly to all stakeholders. This should assist in helping providers to close gaps between the present state of skills provision in Ireland and the anticipated future size and shape of the industry, as defined by consultation with those working in the sector.

Outside of the surveys, there is regular engagement between Screen Skills Ireland and the audiovisual sector. There are 5 industry consultation groups, each made up of approximately 10 industry professionals, who meet regularly with Screen Skills Ireland and provide feedback on the ongoing needs of the industry in the areas of Film and TV Drama; TV Non Fiction; Animation, Games, VFX and AR/VR; Creativity and Creative Collaboration; Business and Mentoring.

Between July 2018 and October 2019, Screen Skills Ireland developed and delivered over 90 industry-focused courses and allocated over 1,250 places. To match skills to production growth, Screen Skills Ireland has developed and delivered a number of new entrant work-based learning programmes (over 14 programmes) between July 2018 and October 2019 to include the successful ‘Passport to Production’ programme. In addition, Screen Skills Ireland has recently developed two new certified work-based learning programmes for new entrants to the sector. These include the new CGI Technical Artist Apprenticeship programme for the animation, VFX and related sectors in partnership with TU Dublin and certified at Level 8 on the NFQ, and the ‘Media Production



Traineeship' programme in partnership with Galway Roscommon ETB and certified at Level 5 on the NFQ.

On 9 October 2019, Screen Skills Ireland hosted a free 'Responsible Production' event to foster responsible production activity and create more positive and inclusive work environments. The first Panel at the event focused on 'Identifying Skills Needs on Production and Capturing Outcomes and Impact of Skills Activity' and comprised panel guests from the industry, training providers and industry representative bodies. The overall aim of the event, which was attended by over 150 participants from the screen sector in Ireland, was to look at ways in which the sector can positively collaborate to enhance skills development; to foster diversity and inclusion; to encourage green/sustainable film making and ultimately, to use improvements in these areas as a competitive advantage for the screen sector going forward.

With the high level aim of matching skills to production growth and encouraging more collaboration between industry and education, a new annual Screen Industry Education Forum event was established by Screen Skills Ireland in November 2018. This annual event brings together industry stakeholders and education providers to focus on the skills development challenges and opportunities facing the screen sectors in Ireland. Over 200 representatives from the screen sector registered for the 2019 event which took place on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and also saw the launch of Screen Skills Ireland's 10 Point Action Plan (2020-2025) which will frame the work of the agency over the next five years. The Action Plan outlines ten key areas of focus, including: increasing industry engagement; developing screen careers; developing work-based learning initiatives; capturing data and outcomes; increasing screen mentoring; supporting regional production; increasing specialist screen schemes; and supporting career-long learning; improving screen industry culture.

The continuing growth of the audiovisual industry in Ireland relies in part on the continued development of skills and the provision of training to workers in the sector. The Section 481 tax relief requires beneficiaries to provide training in the course of production. With revisions made to the Section 481 administration under the Film Regulations 2019, the opportunity was taken to involve Screen Skills Ireland in the assessment of certain Skills Development Plans required as part of an application to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for a certificate under Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. Where eligible expenditure on a film is expected to exceed €2 million, producer companies must work with Screen Skills Ireland to develop a comprehensive Skills Development Plan. Producer companies are required to set out planned training and skills development initiatives and are encouraged to undertake a skills needs analysis to ascertain not alone the skills development needs of the production and/or the company but also the skills needs of the individuals engaged on the production and the wider screen sector. As part of this process, Screen Skills Ireland has engaged in extensive consultation with the various Screen Guilds and developed resources for producer companies to capture data related to skills activity, including outcomes and impact. The new Section 481 skills development requirement offers the opportunity to industry guilds, producers and other stakeholders to remove barriers to entry into the industry, remove barriers to progression opportunities within the industry and to encourage a more diverse and inclusive industry culture.

### Educational sector alignment with the industry:

There is a range of initiatives underway to increase the alignment of courses on offer by further and higher education providers and the needs of the audiovisual industry which address matters raised by both the OSN Report and in the Crowe Howarth Report.

On average, 1,200 students enter higher education courses in the audiovisual sector each year. The majority of these (approximately 900 students) undertake courses at Level 8 (honours degree) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), with the vast majority of the courses provided by Institutes of Technology. Universities provide courses to approximately 120 students each year. Courses are spread across four main areas comprising Advertising, Visual Communications and Graphic Design (147 new entrants 2017/18); Digital/Creative Media (536 new entrants 2017/18); Film, TV, Animation (354 new entrants 2017/18) and Video Games (192 new entrants 2017/18).

Springboard+ provides courses in the audiovisual sector. In 2018, there were 220 (2017:127) participants on such courses across 7 different public and private higher education institutions. Courses were at levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the NFQ.

In 2015, the Government launched *Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025*<sup>13</sup>. As part of that strategy, new Regional Skills Fora were established to provide an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions. The fora provide a single contact point in each region to help employers connect with the range of services and supports available across the education and training system. They also provide more robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs to inform programme development which leads to a greater collaboration and utilisation of resources across the education and training system and the enhancement of progression routes for learners. The structure allows employers to become more involved in promoting employment roles and opportunities for career progression in their sectors. Nine Regional Skills Forum Managers have been put in place to be the key contact points and lead the work of the Forum in each Region. At the Screen Industry Education Forum in November 2019, which featured contributions from a number of education and training providers, producers and companies were encouraged to engage with the Regional Skills Forum Managers to have skills identified and captured so that this might feed into future government education and skills policy decisions.

In conjunction with the SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU), the Regional Skills Fora have also developed 'Skills for Growth'. This is a skills initiative which will make it easier for employers to identify their skill needs and receive guidance on which education and training providers are best suited to their requirements. The purpose of the 'Skills for Growth' project is to increase the quality and quantity of data available on skills needs in individual enterprises, to allow for enhanced engagement between enterprise, education and training providers and other relevant members of Regional Skills Fora. Skills for Growth will aid in building a more complete picture of regional and national skills needs, contributing towards a more robust national response in future. It is planned that, as the project is extended, further partners will also become involved in the initiative.

---

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/pub\\_national\\_skills\\_strategy\\_2025.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/pub_national_skills_strategy_2025.pdf)

Skillnet Ireland is a business support agency with the objective of advancing the competitiveness, productivity and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led workforce development. Funded by the Department of Education and Skills through the National Training Fund, Skillnet Ireland operates under a unique and innovative joint investment model partnering with key industry representative groups across the audiovisual industry.

In the audiovisual sphere, there are currently three industry Skillnet Ireland Networks: the Animation Skillnet provides subsidised training solutions and networking opportunities to the animation, games and VFX sectors in Ireland; Gréasán na Meán Skillnet supports the growth of Ireland's indigenous media industry by delivering networking events and specialised training, primarily through the Irish language, and Screen Skillnet, which was launched in 2019, supports the growth of Ireland's Film, TV and Post-Production sectors through the provision of bespoke training and professional networking events.

In 2018, Skillnet Ireland grants amounted to over €607,000 across the Animation Skillnet and Gréasán na Meán Skillnet. With employer-matching funding of €373,000, more than €980,000 was spent delivering training programmes supporting the development needs of the audiovisual sector through Skillnet Ireland's funding streams and the joint investment model.

The Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) publishes research and reports that facilitates development and review of policy and practice in the further and higher education sectors as well as other related sectors. The SLMRU also manages the National Skills Database and provides labour market data and analysis to the Education and Training Board (ETB) sector which supports the joint SOLAS/ETB annual business planning exercise.

In 2018 Screen Skills Ireland worked extensively with the audiovisual sector to create occupational profiles for each job role from new entrant to Head of Department level. This has led to the development of a competency framework, setting standards for the knowledge, skills and competencies of each role, so that performances are benchmarked. The framework and occupation profile offers a best practice approach that could facilitate more structured career progression if widely adopted across the sector. It also offers a resource to education and training providers to more adequately align course curricula to the actual roles that exist within the production environment.

#### ***4.5.1 Conclusions on Skills Development***

A sub-committee of the Steering Group comprising representatives from Screen Skills Ireland, Department of Education, Enterprise Ireland, the BAI, Creative Ireland and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has been set up to consider actions to improve skills development. The oversight of training and the alignment of the education sector to the needs of the industry remains a standing item on the agenda of the Steering Group and initiatives such as the skills needs surveys, the renewed focus on quality training as part of Section 481 and ongoing engagement with the industry will ensure that continuing strides are made on the Skills Development policy area. The industry is also encouraged to proactively engage with the education and training system and to facilitate workers in participating in upskilling and re-skilling opportunities.

## 4.6 Regulatory Reform

### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.29**

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is working with the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade to sign the recently-updated European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Communications, Climate Action and Environment published a Report on the Future Funding of Public Service Broadcasting on 28th November 2017 and a Report on the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Broadcasting (Amendment) Bill 2017 and Retransmission Fees on 8th March 2018. The Committee's recommendations are currently under consideration by Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

### European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production

The revised European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (ETS No 220) was adopted on 29 June 2016 and on 30 January 2017, opened for signature by member states and for accession by non-member states and the European Community.

This revised Convention updates a previous Convention (ETS No. 147) adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992. The 1992 Convention had set out a platform to make cinematographic co-productions more systematic and easier to construct by providing a legal and financial framework for the co-production of feature-length films involving producers from three or more European countries. The Convention also facilitated a bilateral framework in the absence of a specific co-production treaty between two European countries. By providing clear rules and predictability, the Convention facilitated both the work of film producers and the national authorities responsible for regulating the sector and the measures are further underpinning film co-production in Europe.

Ireland joined the Convention in 2000 and it has been of significant assistance in the development of Irish coproduction with partners in other European countries. Ireland is an active user of the Convention and it has facilitated effective co-production with all European territories and strengthened Ireland's cultural ties and relationships with EU territories. The United Kingdom remains a key partner for Ireland due to the easy cross movement of talent as well as our shared language and history. The UK Government officially signed the revised Convention on 7 February 2019 which confers added flexibility to UK producers and their international partners whose countries are signatories and should continue to facilitate the UK in working with Europe and other international territories (though it is important to note that whether there is a Brexit deal or not may have an impact on certain bilateral agreements and developments in this regard are being kept under review).

Over the 24 years since the 1992 Convention came into force, the film industry has undergone profound changes, both in terms of technology and as a part of an increasingly globalised content market. National policies in the audiovisual domain have reflected these changes and production incentives have multiplied as many, often smaller, European countries seek to build skills and capacity in their domestic production sector by attracting international production and consolidating

co-operation. In response, the 1992 Convention has been revised so as to keep pace with changes in the industry and to ensure its continued relevance.

The Audiovisual Action Plan committed the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to continue to work with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to get the Treaty signed. This was achieved in May 2019, and, in accordance with the entering into force provisions of Article 19(2), the revised treaty entered into force for Ireland on 1 September 2019.

### Public Service Broadcasting

The landscape of public service broadcasting is undergoing fundamental changes both nationally and internationally. Changing trends in media consumption and the shift in advertising revenue to digital has impacted all broadcasters. A 2017 Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on the ***Future Funding of Public Service Broadcasting***<sup>14</sup> examined the changing landscape and how funding for public service broadcasting could be put on a sustainable path into the future. The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) completed its Five Year Review of funding for public service broadcasters in 2018 and concluded that both RTÉ and TG4 continue to deliver value for Irish audiences and that there is a strong justification to support increased levels of funding for RTÉ and TG4 which should assist them in meeting environmental, technological and financial challenges while also fulfilling audience expectations into the future<sup>15</sup>. In July 2018, an interdepartmental ‘Working Group on the Future Funding of Public Service Broadcasting’ was established to examine options for the collection of the TV licence fee or its replacement, drawing on the work of the Joint Oireachtas Committee. The Working Group Report was published on 2 August 2019. The Government<sup>16</sup> accepted the Working Group’s<sup>17</sup> recommendations to tender for licence fee collection and ultimately to replace the fee with a device independent charge. The report recognises that while there is no ideal collection mechanism or perfect solution to hand, a device independent charge needs to be introduced to cater for changes in technology and consumer trends. However, there is a range of complex challenges to be addressed in advance of implementing this approach. To allow time for these challenges to be addressed while also seeking to address the immediate public service broadcasting funding difficulties, a two-step approach is to be implemented. It is planned that the TV licence collection will be put out to public tender when the enabling legislation, (the Broadcasting Bill 2018), is available. It would be necessary to offer a fixed term contract of 5 years in order to make it feasible for the successful tender to invest in database and collection improvements. Thereafter, at the end of the contract period, the proposal is that the licence fee be replaced by a device-independent charge to support public service content on a sustainable basis. Reform of the collection mechanism and the ultimate move to a device independent charge should result in additional funding being available to the public service broadcasters and to the wider broadcasting sector through the Sound and Vision Scheme administered by BAI which is financed from the licence

---

<sup>14</sup> 2017 JOC Report

[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_communications\\_climate\\_action\\_and\\_environment/reports/2017/2017-11-28\\_report-on-the-future-funding-of-public-service-broadcasting\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_communications_climate_action_and_environment/reports/2017/2017-11-28_report-on-the-future-funding-of-public-service-broadcasting_en.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bai.ie/en/broadcasting-authority-of-ireland-statement-on-five-year-review-of-public-funding/>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Government\\_Response\\_to\\_Five\\_Year\\_Review\\_2018.pdf](https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Government_Response_to_Five_Year_Review_2018.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/communications/topics/broadcasting-media/funding-of-public-service-broadcasting/Pages/TV-Licence-Reform.aspx>

fee. This will help to support the independent production sector in line with the Audiovisual Action Plan.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAIE) has also committed in its Statement of Strategy 2019-2021 to a review of the Broadcasting Act, 2009 over the period of the Strategy which will include a review of the proportion of TV licence funding allocated to the Sound and Vision Scheme and a review of the minimum amount of funding that RTE is obliged to make available each year under Section 116 of the Act for the external commissioning of radio and television programming.

#### **4.6.1 Conclusions on Regulatory Reforms**

Significant progress has been made under this policy area with Ireland signed up to the revised Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-production since May 2019 and a clear pathway identified for reform of the TV licence fee collection.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment is currently managing the progress of the Broadcasting Bill through the Houses of the Oireachtas and its enactment will provide for the tendering of licence fee collection creating the potential to reduce evasion and increase funding that will be of benefit generally to the audiovisual sector. Following the conclusion of a public consultation earlier this year, DCCAIE is also progressing plans for the transposition of the revised AVMSD with Heads of Bill expected to be submitted to Government by the end of 2019. The Department will also progress the review of the Sound and Vision Scheme and the minimum statutory requirements on RTÉ to commission content from the independent production sector.

## **4.7 Marketing**

### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.30**

Screen Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and IDA Ireland will examine “Irish Games” branding at events while Screen Ireland will review supports to visit markets in consultation with Enterprise Ireland. The Steering Group will also review initiatives to attract a major games studio to Ireland.

Screen Ireland’s change of name from the Irish Film Board in early 2018, acknowledges and encompasses the widening remit of the agency. It reflects the vision which the Government has for a vibrant film and screen content production sector and allows Screen Ireland to continue to promote Irish stories on emerging digital platforms, alongside the existing, traditional cinema and television formats. As the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets Enterprise Ireland endeavours to provide marketing support to all Irish business sectors, including the games industry. Likewise, IDA Ireland works to encourage investment into Ireland across a range of sectors. Screen Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland continue to promote the Irish Games sector as appropriate and keep Irish Games branding under review.

Under the Audiovisual Action Plan, the Steering Group will review initiatives to attract a major games studio to Ireland. It has been noted that without meaningful incentives for games development, Ireland is at a comparative disadvantage to other locations in seeking to attract games studios.

## 4.8 Other supports and reform

### **Extract Audiovisual Plan P.33**

Enterprise Ireland provides assistance to companies in the area of Intellectual Property. Screen Ireland will examine ways to improve supports for Audiovisual companies in this area.

The Steering Group will examine models for the provision of studio space for creative artists.

A new initiative has been launched by TG4, Screen Ireland and the BAI called the Cine4 Development Scheme, a new joint-funding initiative to support the development and production of feature films in the Irish language with funding of up to €125,000 annually. Screen Ireland is also providing €300,000 each for two feature films in the Irish Language in 2018 and again in 2019.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in conjunction with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will examine mechanisms to further promote Irish language production.

The Steering group will also review factors that may inhibit support for FTE jobs.

### Intellectual Property:

Enterprise Ireland provides assistance to companies in the area of Intellectual Property. Enterprise Ireland's intellectual property (IP) strategy offer for clients is focused on securing maximum value for IP and embedding IP strategy in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). In 2019, Enterprise Ireland hosted workshops focused on the commercialisation of animation IP for the UK and Europe. In 2020, Enterprise Ireland will host a further workshop focused on animation IP commercialisation for the US. Screen Ireland continues to review its various funding schemes and initiatives on an ongoing basis to improve supports for audiovisual companies.

### Studio Space:

Under the Audiovisual Action Plan, the Steering Group will examine models for the provision of studio space for creative artists. The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht provides significant capital support for the enhancement and protection of cultural spaces under **Project Ireland 2040**<sup>18</sup>, the Government's long-term overarching strategy for investment in Ireland's public infrastructure. On 23 October 2019, the Department launched a new €4.7m capital investment scheme for arts and culture centres. This scheme will run until 2022 and focus on enhancing the

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/09022006-project-ireland-2040/>

existing stock of arts and culture centres throughout the country. It will also prioritise carbon footprint reduction in line with the Government's action on climate change. The scheme builds on the success of the former 'Arts and Culture Capital Scheme 2016-2018' which saw 134 organisations in 26 counties receive funding to refurbish and enhance their arts and culture facilities. The Department has also allocated an amount of up to €3 million in principle to Dublin City Council for capital development works for studio workspaces to match funding provided under the urban regeneration development fund on sites owned by the city council. This level of investment will greatly benefit the artists in the area and address the deficit in artist workspaces in Dublin city.

Responsibility for local cultural spaces rests in the first instance with local authorities, which are charged under section 10 of the Planning and Development Act with adopting a development plan that integrates the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht works closely with local authorities to support culture, creativity and heritage activities throughout Ireland.

With a global rise in demand for audiovisual content, and Ireland's attractiveness as a location for production given its skilled workforce and the Section 481 tax credit, there is increased demand for film studio space. Expansions of high quality studio space are already underway in certain areas and the issue of studio space will be an item considered by the Steering Group in future meetings.

#### Irish language production:

The Cine4 Development Scheme which is a joint-funding initiative between TG4, Screen Ireland and the BAI continues to provide support for the development and production of feature films in the Irish language. To date €450,000 has been allocated through the Cine 4 scheme to support the development of such projects and production funding of over €7m has been allocated to 6 projects. The first *Finky* was premiered this year. A further development round with a budget of €150,000 is planned for 2020. In addition a new initiative aimed at developing a teenage drama in Irish has been launched in 2019 and funding for four projects was awarded in quarter 3 2019. It is expected that production funding for one project will be secured in 2020.

In 2019, TG4 will receive €36.2m in exchequer funding (€34.2m current and €2m capital) an increase of €443,000 over 2018 funding. TG4 was also allocated a once-off capital grant of €985,000 in 2018 for its expenditure relating to Bliain na Gaeilge.

#### Factors affecting support for FTE jobs:

In July 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection jointly announcing the extension of the Social Welfare Scheme for Self-Employed Artists to the wider Creative Community, including those working in the performing arts and film. This is an initiative of the **Creative Ireland Programme** and extends a pilot of the scheme that had been initially announced in June 2017 for visual artists and writers. The expanded scheme recognises the unique creative circumstances of artists including, amongst others, actors, theatre and film directors, and set, costume and lighting designers and gives them special assistance in their first year out of work, allowing them to focus on their creative output. It allows artists retain access to Jobseekers Allowance while they work on developing their portfolio in



creative and artistic spheres. This is an important measure that delivers on the aim of ensuring Irish government departments and agencies are empowered to recognise the value the screen industries generate.

The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, which was passed in December, addresses insecurity and unpredictability of working hours for employees on insecure contracts and those working variable hours. The Act provides for a requirement that employers provide employees with certain terms of employment within a certain period after commencing employment; to impose sanctions for certain offences; to further provide for a minimum payment due to employees in certain circumstances; to prohibit contracts specifying zero as the contract hours in certain circumstances and to provide for the introduction of banded contract hours; to further provide for prohibition of penalisation, and for those purposes to amend the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994 and the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997; and to amend the Workplace Relations Act 2015.

As part of the recent changes in Section 481 a further requirement in respect of quality employment was introduced. In availing of the Section 481 tax credit, the producer company and the qualifying company must be responsible for compliance with all statutory requirements of an employer, have in place written policies and procedures on grievances, discipline and dignity at work (including harassment, bullying and equal opportunity). The companies are also required to provide details of any Workplace Relations Commission decisions aligned with confirmation that any findings against the companies have been followed or an explanation where the finding has not been followed.

## **5 Other matters arising at the Audiovisual Steering Group meetings**

One of the Recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on Development and Working Conditions in the Irish Film Industry was that Screen Ireland reconstitute its Film Forum with an independent Chair, in order to allow all stakeholders within the sector to meet and work together to develop mutually beneficial solutions for the industry. Screen Ireland made significant attempts to carry out this recommendation but was unable to do so due to divisions between various bodies representing workers in the audiovisual industry. Given the contrary positions of the parties, Screen Ireland informed the Joint Committee in December 2018 that it could not proceed without excluding one or more of the parties who should participate in the Film Forum. There was also a concern that rather than providing a mechanism for a collaborative and inclusive approach to develop and exchange ideas to enhance the industry, the forum would instead be used to air disputes and grievances that had previously been raised before the Joint Committee. The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) has now confirmed that it is to undertake an audit of the Independent Film and Television Drama Production Sector with a view to:

- examining industrial relations generally, employment practices and procedure,
- assessing issues arising (if any), and
- making recommendations for their improvement where appropriate.

The WRC has published a Workplace Relations Notice on its website, inviting submissions from stakeholders on the above listed matters by 31 October 2019.

The Steering Group is also examining ways to update the employment figures contained in the OSN Report and has established a sub-group to examine the current availability of data, future data needs and any measures that can be taken to improve data collection in this regard. The sub-group has met with representative bodies of the audiovisual sector and has begun a collaborative process with the Central Statistics Office to improve identification and application of NACE codes to companies in the audiovisual sector.

## **6 Conclusion**

A significant portion of the Audiovisual Action Plan has been implemented over the lifetime of the Plan to date. In particular, much work has been done in relation to reforms of the Section 481 tax credit and training and skills development, given their widely acknowledged importance to the audiovisual industry. The Steering Group will continue to implement the actions set out in the plan and will continue to provide regular progress reports.



An Roinn Cultúir,  
Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta  
Department of Culture,  
Heritage, and the Gaeltacht