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SCREEN  
PRODUCERS  
IRELAND

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# POLICY ON PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

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## Public Service Broadcasting Policy

Ireland's public service broadcasters need to be adequately funded.

The provision of a well-funded public service broadcaster is an important principle for most national governments. SPI believes Ireland should move towards the European norm where PSB's are funded principally from licence fee revenue with little or no reliance on advertising and commercial revenues.

Public service broadcasters RTÉ and TG4, need security of funding to meet their obligations under the Broadcasting Act.

This can be achieved through the introduction of an adequate household media charge which SPI supports and by initiating plans to decouple RTÉ and TG4 from the advertising market.

Efficiencies and value for money for the tax payer must be a condition of this policy and for this reason we believe RTÉ should move towards the emerging trend of the publisher-broadcaster model.

The publisher-broadcaster model operated by Channel 4 in the UK is recognized as a more cost-effective and innovative way of producing quality content, while supporting the enterprise economy and giving audiences access to a wider range of programming and creative talent. The BBC is currently moving in this direction by restructuring its organizational model and re-purposing its entire in-house production

SPI believes that legislative change should be enacted to introduce the household media charge. Plans should be initiated to decouple RTÉ and TG4 from reliance on advertising income. RTÉ should move towards the emerging trend of the publisher-broadcaster model by doubling the statutory spend on independently produced content from the current level of €40M p/a to €80M p/a.

## PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THIS POLICY IS BASED

### FUNDING

#### **Household-based media charge**

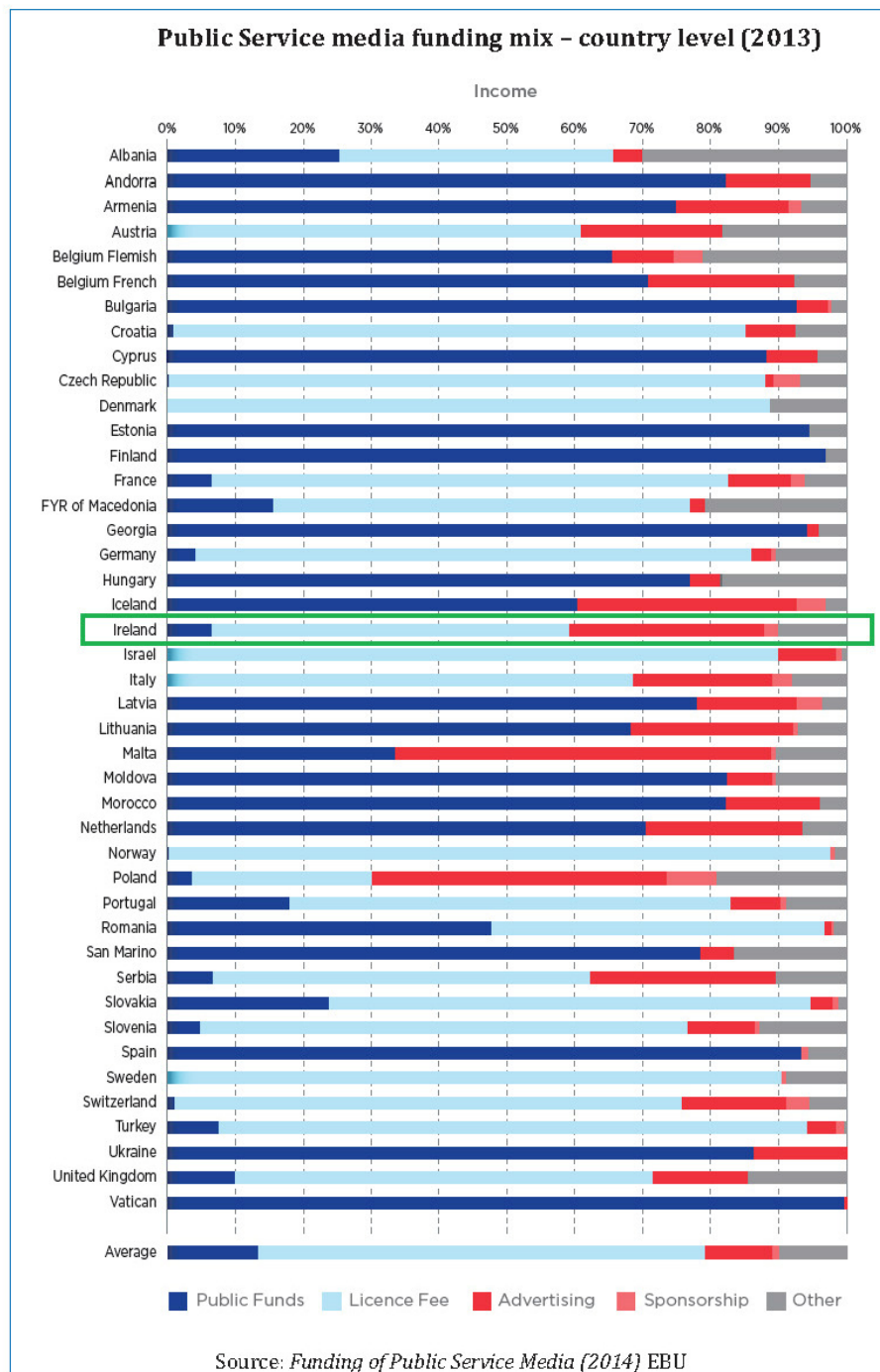
The current licence fee model is no longer fit for purpose, as acknowledged in the Programme for Government 2011-2016. SPI supports the introduction of a household-based media charge to ensure a stable funding base for Irish public service broadcasting.

#### **Dual funding model**

The dual funding model of licence fee and high levels of dependency on advertising/commercial income leaves Ireland's public service broadcasters open to significant fluctuations in their annual budget. It gives rise to uncertainty in the sector through not having long term visibility on income levels to guarantee compliance with public service commitments.

Of the 43 countries surveyed by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in 2014, Ireland's public service broadcaster is the third most dependent PSB on advertising income, after Poland and Malta.

The table below outlines the funding mix of public service media in the 43 territories surveyed.



RTÉ’s dependency on commercial income (44% in 2013) also contributes to a distortion in the media and advertising market in Ireland. Competitor broadcasters, regional radio, newspapers and other media outlets claim unfair advantage.

Since the economic downturn, RTÉ’s total income has fallen from €441M in 2008 to €327M in 2013, a fall of €114M or 26%. The principal reason for the decrease is the dramatic drop in advertising revenue during the period. Ireland’s primary public service broadcaster dependency on advertising income means a large proportion of its income is vulnerable to fluctuations. This is not the case in most European territories where the income is stable. RTÉ’s funding needs to be stabilized and TG4’s funding needs certainty. Currently a significant percentage of TG4 funding is discretionary government funding. Stability can be achieved through an adequate household media charge.

## **PUBLISHER-BROADCASTER MODEL**

Efficiencies and value for money must be a condition of this policy and for this reason we believe RTÉ should move towards the emerging trend of the publisher-broadcaster model, retaining core functions of news and current affairs within RTÉ.

The publisher-broadcaster model such as Channel 4 and TG4 is an efficient and cost-effective model to deliver quality public service broadcasting in the rapidly changing digital media environment, as evidenced internationally.

SPI believes that programming made by independent producers is high quality, cost-effective and makes the best use of the public money. Independent producers have consistently delivered some of the highest rating and valued programmes for Irish audiences since the introduction of the minimum statutory spend in 1993 (see table below). The independent production sector offers diversity of ideas, innovative and quality content, transparency and accountability for every euro of the licence fee spent on programmes commissioned.

RTÉ as a publisher-broadcaster would be a better use of the licence fee and would result in a greater volume of quality, original Irish programming available for Irish audiences.

SPI believes that legislative change should be enacted to introduce the household media charge. Plans should be initiated to decouple RTÉ and TG4 from reliance on advertising income. The statutory spend on independently produced content should be doubled from the current level of €40M p/a to €80M p/a to pave the way for RTÉ to move towards the emerging trend of the publisher-broadcaster model.

## RTÉ One, RATINGS FOR TOP 30 PROGRAMMES IN 2014

7 of the top 20 titles were produced by Irish independent producers

11 of the top 20 were in-house RTÉ productions

Position	Programme Title	Transmission Date
1	The Late Late Toy Show	28-11-2014
2	Love/Hate Episode 6	09-11-2014
3	Amber Episode 4	22-01-2014
4	Mrs Brown's Boys: Mammy's Gamble	31-12-2014
5	The Sunday Game Live Hurling Final	07-09-2014
6	Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special: Mammy's Tickle	25-12-2014
7	RTE News: Nine O'clock	02-03-2014
8	The Voice Of Ireland	02-02-2014
9	The Late Late Show	28-02-2014
10	Rose Of Tralee	19-08-2014
11	Prime Time Inside Bungalow 3	09-12-2014
12	Fair City	04-02-2014
13	RTE News: Six One	06-01-2014
14	ROG - The Ronan O'Gara Documentary	02-01-2014
15	Operation Transformation	04-02-2014
16	At Your Service	12-01-2014
17	New Years Eve Live	31-12-2014
18	Michaella Peru, And The Drugs Run	07-07-2014
19	RTE News (Late)	28-11-2014
20	Reeling In The Years	03-01-2014
21	The Fall	17-12-2014
22	The Santa Clause 2	20-12-2014
23	Mrs Brown's Boys	09-02-2014
24	EastEnders	11-02-2014
25	The Nolan's	10-02-2014
26	Up For The Match	20-09-2014
27	Quirke	16-02-2014
28	The Saturday Night Show	01-02-2014
29	Tony O'Reilly - The Real Deal	03-11-2014
30	Winning Streak	25-01-2014

Indigenous Irish  
Independent Production

In-House RTE Production

Co-Production/ Enhanced  
Acquisition by RTE

Acquired Programme

\* Source Nielsen/TAM Ireland consolidated: Any Day, Any time, Best Episode, Ranked by TVR, National Individuals 4+, Programme duration greater than 10 minutes, RTÉ only.

## RTÉ One, RATINGS FOR TOP 30 PROGRAMMES IN 2013

9 of the top 20 titles were produced by Irish independent producers

8 of the top 20 were in-house RTÉ productions

RTÉ One: 2013 Top 30 Programmes for All Individuals  
Any Day/Any Time/Best Episode/Ranked by TVR

Position	Programme Title	Transmission Date
1	Late Late Toy Show	
2	Love/Hate (Drama)	10-11-2013
3	Mrs Brown's Boys	02-02-2013
4	Eurovision Song Contest	18-05-2013
5	RTE News: Nine O'Clock	20-01-2013
6	Voice Of Ireland, The	20-01-2013
7	RTE News: Six One	13-03-2013
8	Operation Transformation	27-02-2013
9	Fair City	02-01-2013
10	Raw (Drama)	10-02-2013
11	Late, Late Show, The	25-01-2013
12	Rose Of Tralee, The	20-08-2013
13	At Your Service	20-01-2013
14	Late Late Show, The	18-10-2013
15	Prime Time	28-05-2013
16	Toy Story 3	16-02-2013
17	Irish Film And Television Awards, The	09-02-2013
18	Voice Of Ireland - Results, The	17-03-2013
19	Life On The Inside	18-02-2013
20	Hector Goes...	14-01-2013
21	RTE News (Late)	18-05-2013
22	Saturday Night Show, The	26-01-2013
23	Room To Improve	02-01-2013
24	Eastenders	08-01-2013
25	Dragons' Den Junior	28-04-2013
26	Leap Year	02-01-2013
27	Tommy Bowe's Bodycheck	24-02-2013
28	Reeling In The Years	02-01-2013
29	Dragons' Den	21-04-2013
30	Santa Clause, The	09-11-2013

Indigenous Irish Independent Production
In-House RTE Production
Acquisition by RTE
Acquired Programme

\* Source Nielsen/TAM Ireland consolidated: Any Day, Any time, Best Episode, Ranked by TVR, National Individuals 4+, Programme duration greater than 10 minutes, RTÉ only.

# SCREEN PRODUCERS IRELAND

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