[IE] Review of Funding for Public Service Broadcasting Published

IRIS 2013-8:1/26

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On 18 July 2013, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) published its review of funding for the public service broadcasters, RTÉ and TG4, for the next five year period. As part of the review, the BAI made recommendations relating to the future levels and use of public funding including the processes required to ensure funding is adequately and appropriately accounted for.

The BAI is required under section 124(8) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 to carry out a review of the adequacy, or otherwise, of public funding to enable public service broadcasters to meet their public service objectives. Such a funding review must be completed at least once every five years. As part of the review process the BAI considered the broadcasters detailed costed plans for the five year period and a commissioned report from a firm of consultants, Crowe Horwath.

The review recognised that, in order to ensure investment in programme output, RTÉ will require an increase in public funding. The BAI recommends that there should be no increase in licence fee funding. Any increased funding is conditional on further cost reductions by RTÉ, with the increase channelled, where possible, through the independent production sector. The review also recommends a re-balancing between the proportions of public and commercial funding of RTÉ. In relation to TG4 the BAI recommends that funding be maintained at current levels.

Among other key recommendations is a proposed change in the setting of advertising limits across all broadcasters. Currently three separate methods are in place to determine the limits of advertising minutage (see IRIS 2010-1/29). Arising from the review, it is recommended that the responsibility for advertising limits for all broadcasters should rest with the BAI with a provision, if considered necessary, that the consent of the Minister be required for any adjustments in the case of RTÉ.

As required by the Broadcasting Act 2009 the report and recommendations were presented to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources for consideration by Government. The Minister and Government have responded positively to the review and the BAI has begun the process of preparing an implementation plan to progress the recommendations.

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Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), Five-year Review of Public Funding: Authority Recommendations, June 2013

http://www.bai.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/20130619_BAI-Recommendations-to-Minister-with-Addendum_FINAL_CC.pdf

Crowe Horwath, Final Report to the BAI: Review of Funding for Public Service Broadcasters, 23 May 2013

http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/3FE93EDE-8BA7-4D9E-9ADB-A5B9574088F9/0/20130621_PSB5Yr_Rpt_PublicRedacted_vFinal_DB.pdf

Government Response to the Five-year Review of Funding for Public Service Broadcasters

http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/E78CB25D-9F80-4BD5-99ED-0003AB2D24F5/0/GovernmentResponsetoBAIFiveYearReviewofFundingforPSBsJuly2013.pdf

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