

Enablers of RTÉ's strategy

Audience insights
Innovation and creativity
Creative partnerships
Operations, technology and data
Financial sustainability



For RTÉ to successfully deliver the audience, content and services elements outlined above, the following key enablers are required. RTÉ must:

- Have a deep understanding of audiences in Ireland
- Drive creativity and innovation in content making
- Expand partnerships with the independent sector
- Create opportunities for staff and attract new and diverse talent
- Improve operations and technology to become more efficient, collaborative and agile
- Increase funding for PSM content

Realising this strategy – audience, content, services and enablers – and ensuring RTÉ's financial sustainability are dependent on several financial assumptions. These include the successful implementation of the new 'One RTÉ' structure through Q4 2017 and early 2018, and an increase in public funding that reflects a reform of the television licence fee system.

Audience insights

Understanding audiences, analysing their behaviours and anticipating their needs are critical to 'putting the audience first'. This provides insights to underpin programming and service decisions, enabling RTÉ to fulfil its public service remit.

RTÉ will:

- Deepen its understanding of the audience in Ireland to include elements such as ethnic origin, personal and social interests, concerns and ways of consuming content
- Enhance the levels of collaboration between research and content producers, ensuring that audience insights are core to the production cycle
- Maximise the insights drawn from existing data sources, building on internal and external partnerships
- Demonstrate the value of RTÉ and its contribution to Irish society with key stakeholders

Innovation and creativity

RTÉ acknowledges the continuous need to support and refresh creativity and innovation, both on and off screen. It will fully embed it in the cultural lifeblood of RTÉ to better serve its audience.

RTÉ will:

- Further invest in creative leadership programmes to develop creative talent and establish a network of leaders who will foster and drive RTÉ's creative capacity
- Adopt a systematic approach (based on Stanford University's needs, approach, benefits, competition method) that puts the audience at the heart of all creative decisions
- Develop innovation partnerships with training providers and explore new partnerships with companies at the forefront of innovation
- Introduce new production methods and technologies to enhance the audience experience

Digital Lab

RTÉ will invest in a production unit to create compelling public service content for online audiences and meet the fast-changing needs of younger audiences. From long-form digital series and bite-size video shorts to podcasts and virtual reality (VR) experiences, a new generation of makers will create fresh online content available on any connected device. The lab will include state-of-the-art technologies and facilities to enable new ways of content creation and will drive experimentation with VR, 360°, augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI). It will be an open, collaborative space and will enable third parties to co-create with RTÉ.

Establishing the digital lab is central to RTÉ's two-pronged content strategy – continuing to bolster linear schedules while developing and investing in the digital offering.

Creative partnerships

Creative partnerships increasingly play a critical role in the funding and development of content for audiences in Ireland. These partnerships allow for the co-production and co-funding of high-end productions, as production costs for programming (such as children's animation, drama, comedy, science and natural history) increase. The Irish independent production sector is collectively RTÉ's largest and most important creative partner. RTÉ wants to commission more from this sector. RTÉ will:

- Significantly enhance the range, scale and diversity of its creative partnerships
- Spend at least 50% of the proceeds of public funding reform on independent commissions

This will represent a substantial increase in RTÉ's overall spend with the sector and reflects RTÉ's ongoing commitment to Ireland's creative sector, supporting jobs and growth.

RTÉ works with different partners and will continue to do so. Such partnerships – the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) Sound and Vision Fund, the Irish Film Board (IFB), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Worldwide, Franco-German public broadcaster ARTE, Animation Ireland, the Arts Council, Science Foundation Ireland, educational institutions, TG4 and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) – are essential to deliver distinctive, relevant and impactful programming.

Creative Ireland, the Government's legacy programme for Ireland 2016, will be a key partnership for RTÉ. RTÉ shares much of its ambition and, building on its central role within the 2016 commemorations, has been actively involved in supporting the programme's development.

Creative Ireland is broken into five pillars, all of which resonate strongly with RTÉ's remit. Pillar 4, which aims to support the development of "Ireland as a centre of excellence in media production", is particularly important for RTÉ. As part of Pillar 1, RTÉ will partner to develop and deliver an innovative national project that inspires children to respond creatively to great orchestral music.

People

RTÉ employs more than 1,800 people (48% female and 52% male). RTÉ provides career progression and opportunity with practices that support work-life balance and flexibility. RTÉ's people strategy is rooted in the continued evolution of a passionate, creative, agile RTÉ that has an authentic connection with its audience and meets its remit as the national PSM organisation.

Through its people strategy, RTÉ will:

- Fully integrate diversity and inclusion into its recruitment, learning and coaching activities
- Create greater opportunities and career opportunities for staff through a simplified organisation that promotes increased creativity, collaboration, mobility and flexibility, helping retain talent and bring potential talent to life
- Attract new and diverse talent and engage with third-level institutions to secure a sustainable pipeline of young talent
- Invest in continuous learning and development, with priority for improving RTÉ's connectivity with its audience and promoting the mutual investment in career ownership
- Equip leaders with the skills to effectively lead multi-discipline teams and support individual development through training, coaching and mentoring
- Survey the strength of employee connectivity and use findings to identify areas of improvement

Enablers of RTÉ's strategy

Given that RTÉ will undergo great change over the coming years (and beyond), a Change Management Leadership team has been established to:

- Build trust and increase positive involvement of staff as part of ongoing change
- Enhance internal staff communications – transparency, consistency and frequency
- Work with the Executive team to implement change initiatives that support this strategy
- Challenge and generate solutions to overcome obstacles, roadblocks and concerns

Operations, technology and data

RTÉ's new operations division will deliver new efficiencies and value, while supporting and enhancing creative workflows. This will significantly reduce costs and improve the quality of operational services.

RTÉ will continue to improve its environmental performance, which has resulted in significant reductions in water, waste and energy usage, and considerable cost savings.

RTÉ must become an effective and efficient digital content business. Since 2012, it has been moving towards a unified and flexible technology environment. However, constrained capital investment has meant there are inefficiencies and some legacy systems have been stretched beyond their useful life, leading to increased complexity and risks.

RTÉ has identified the following six medium-term technology priorities:

- Optimising the technology architecture
- Moving broadcast into a fully internet protocol (IP) world
- Enabling and supporting better ways of working
- Unlocking the value of RTÉ's data
- Exploring next-generation video
- Delivering operational excellence by reducing complexity

RTÉ will improve its data governance, analytics and delivery of insights to become a data-driven organisation that is better able to meet the needs of its audience. RTÉ's data strategy takes a two-pronged approach:

- Data management and governance (including all aspects of the EU General Data Protection Regulation) to ensure there is a single authoritative version of data
- Integration, analytics and delivery of data to make data-driven decisions in an agile manner

Financial sustainability

RTÉ is a dual-funded broadcaster. Its public service remit is delivered through a balance of public funding and commercial income derived from the exploitation of its public service objects as mandated in the Broadcasting Act 2009.

Public funding

Responding to the digital challenge of a changing media sector requires a fundamental change in public policy that reflects how audiences consume content and how best to fund great public service content. Such a review of policy has occurred in several other European countries – such as Germany, Italy, Portugal and Finland – and has improved the sustainability and relevance of PSM.

RTÉ wants to ensure that national legislative and regulatory frameworks support the role, development and accountability of PSM in Ireland, and protects and sustains Irish cultural identity in the wider Irish media sector.

The inefficient licence fee system should be reformed to support this policy and increase public funding levels for the benefit of the entire Irish media sector. There are a variety of reform options and choices available to Government.

The financial model that underpins this strategy is based on conservative estimates around television licence reform and on the premise that RTÉ would not be the only beneficiary of this reform.

The current levels of evasion (15%) and the high cost of collection (5.5%) provide significant scope for reform without any increase in the licence fee. More than €40 million in additional public funding would become available if the system was modernised.

This increase in public funding would principally be invested in the independent sector to create world-class content relating to core public service priorities. RTÉ would spend over 50% of the increase resulting from reform in the Irish independent sector. Through a significant economic multiplier impact on growth and jobs, this would revitalise the wider creative sector and enhance the economic scale and sustainability of the sector.

Commercial income

RTÉ's primary source of commercial income is television advertising, followed by radio advertising and digital. It also receives revenue from quite diverse ancillary sources that can be generally described as non-broadcast revenue streams. RTÉ will pursue opportunities that may arise from legislative or regulatory changes to broaden revenue opportunities.

RTÉ will seek to develop commercial arrangements and deploy new models for both its linear channels and on-demand content services with all the key players in this market. RTÉ is also seeking legislative changes to allow it to negotiate a fair payment for the value it creates for pay-television operators and other potential distributors of its linear channels.

Macro-economic factors

Ireland's economy continues to perform strongly driven by domestic factors, improving household finances and falling unemployment, which are all expected to support solid consumption over the period 2018-2022. Export growth is also expected to continue, but is vulnerable to the unsettled external environment caused by Brexit in the UK, potential changes arising from the new US administration and European political change.

Financial projections

Given the immediate financial challenges it faces, RTÉ is taking radical cost-cutting actions that will see almost 17% of staff leave the organisation. These departures will have an impact on the scope and scale of RTÉ's output and activities. These actions will deliver significant cost savings in the 2018-2022 period, but will not on their own enable the successful and sustainable implementation of this strategy.

Delivery of this strategy cannot be realised without increased public funding that would enable additional investment in content in areas such as drama, comedy, children and young people, and arts and culture, as well as the other priorities outlined in this strategy.