Renewing RTÉ for the next generation
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This strategy sets RTÉ on a sustainable path where public service media (PSM) will be re-imagined for a new generation. It aims to connect with and engages everyone, wherever they are.

On that path, RTÉ will continue to deliver high-quality, distinctive Irish content across its traditional channels and services, while it grows and experiments in the digital space. In an increasingly global and more competitive market, RTÉ will put audiences at the centre of its thinking and will adapt to remain relevant to all audiences.

**Vision, Mission and Values**

**RTÉ’s Vision**
To champion Irish culture by captivating audiences with trusted, engaging and challenging content; celebrating our country’s rich diversity; and cultivating Ireland’s talent.

**RTÉ’s Mission**
To enrich Irish life with content that challenges, educates and entertains.
RTÉ’s Values
As an organisation and individually, RTÉ will be outward looking, creative, respectful, sustainable and accountable, collaborative and transparent. It will also demonstrate the following behaviours:

Outward looking
Have a deep understanding of its audience and their needs. Invest time and energy in monitoring changes in the media landscape.

Creative
Be resourceful and innovative in how it makes its content. Be brave – take risks and be willing to learn from failures.

Respectful
Treat people, including staff and partners, with respect, even when it challenges. Nurture trust by being fair and open about the decisions it makes.

Sustainable and accountable
Manage its business in a responsible manner. Be accountable to each other within RTÉ and to audience and stakeholders.

Collaborative
Work together, bringing the ‘One RTÉ’ organisation to life. Join forces with partners to meet the needs of RTÉ’s audience.

Transparent
Make decisions openly. Be upfront about the reasons for the actions taken.
RTÉ has its origins in the radio service set up by the Irish government shortly after independence, which helped define the voice of the newly emerging nation. With the advent of television in the 1960s, RTÉ again played a key role in reflecting, and indeed nurturing, the social and cultural energies of a rapidly modernising Ireland.

Now, as we move towards the centenary of the foundation of the Irish state – a period when RTÉ has evolved from a radio broadcaster to a radio, television and digital provider – RTÉ must again re-conceive its mission and inaugurate a ‘third phase’ for national public service media as it becomes a fully integrated multi-media organisation. This phase, which coincides with the onset of what is commonly held to be the next Industrial Revolution, will be characterised by digital technologies, a connected world, organisational agility and social diversity.
Throughout its history, RTÉ has responded to the challenges and opportunities of the day with skill and imagination. RTÉ must once more embrace an ambitious re-thinking of its role as a national public service media if it is to remain relevant as a vital driving force for Irish cultural identities and creativity in the global context.

This strategy outlines the direction the national broadcaster will take as we move towards the milestone year of 2022, the centenary of the foundation of the modern Irish state. The plan is built on the belief that RTÉ can and should continue to play an enabling role at the heart of Irish cultural life, energising local communities, championing our world-class achievers and supporting the wider creative sector. Central to this strategy is a renewed commitment to innovation, talent development and collaboration as we work to connect to the most creative and resourceful capabilities across the country.

Like all public service media, RTÉ must recognise that the 21st century is characterised by a complex matrix of social, economic, political and cultural forces. Addressing these challenges requires efficient and agile organisational structures and responsive skill sets informed by the best practices of the creative industries.

RTÉ will continue to ask difficult questions and to hold the powerful to scrutiny. Since its inception RTÉ has endeavoured to provide a service that is free from the coercive pressures of powerful interests, be they commercial or political. Embedded into this strategy is the belief that RTÉ should, in all its activities, serve and empower the citizens of Ireland. It will continue to support and promote the best creative and economic initiatives in Ireland and within Ireland’s wider global community. Important, too, is our influence on the tone of the national conversation and our responsibility to contribute to the national debate, challenging that which is unacceptable and celebrating that which is exemplary.

However, if the 21st century has taught us anything yet, it is that any national organisation is only as strong as those with whom it collaborates and forges partnerships. This plan underlines the fact that RTÉ is determined to:
• Develop the independent production sector in Ireland
• Create ways of capturing and delivering the citizen voice
• Create content that reflects the diversity of an ever-evolving nation
• Work with key political bodies to develop a sustainable funding model for these changing times

In so doing, it recognises the potential for Ireland to establish itself at the forefront of public service media policy across the world.

This strategy, led by the Director-General, will re-imagine RTÉ as a digital-first public service media organisation fit for the 21st century. The physical transformation of the RTÉ Dublin campus itself will symbolise the deep change within an organisation renewing its relationship with the audience it serves.

Historically, Irish political leaders have had the vision and commitment to support the evolution of public service broadcasting at key moments in its history. We look forward to renewed support as we bring RTÉ into this exciting third phase, significantly, just as the Irish State begins a journey into its second century. We go forward with this strategy in a spirit of optimism, but remembering always the advice of economist John Maynard Keynes: the difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.

Moya Doherty,
Chair

P.J. Mathews,
Chair, Board Strategy Committee
Supporting the wider creative ecosystem

Championing our world-class achievers

Energising local communities
For over 50 years RTÉ has uniquely and consistently connected journalism, politics, culture and communities, while retaining the trust of the public. RTÉ remains at the centre of Irish public life, accessed in any given week by more than 90% of the people living in Ireland.

However, as strong as RTÉ’s connection with the public is, there is little doubt that the role that public media plays in Irish life is being challenged like never before.

Innovation, or moreover, the accelerating and disruptive innovation of today is challenging long-established patterns across many sectors, few more so than the media.

While broad patterns of media consumption endure, with linear television and radio remaining very strong, major changes in the market are shifting audience behaviour and expectations (particularly among younger people) towards online and mobile services.

Over the next five years, as broadband speeds and coverage extends fully into rural areas, as digital devices become smarter and global competition becomes even greater, the effects of digital disruption on media are likely to become even more fast-moving and profound.
This strategy sets out how we will re-imagine RTÉ for the next generation – a generation that has never been without the internet, smart phones, on-demand video services, social media and access to the best programming and content from all over the world; a generation for which RTÉ is only one of many sources of news, programming and information that they value and trust.

Of course, this is not the profile of the majority of the audience today. But given the accelerating rate of change, RTÉ must prepare for a world in which unlimited on-demand choice, multiple screens and hyper-connectivity will increasingly become the norm for everyone.

If RTÉ is to remain relevant, we must now begin to understand and meet the needs of this new generation and we must re-imagine public service media so that it works for and engages everyone, wherever they are.

It does not mean we will abandon existing linear audiences; these audience numbers remain robust and, as a group, they hugely value much of what we do every day. We have to continue to deliver compelling programming across our linear channels and services while we grow and experiment in the digital space. We have to continue to deliver the best reporting and journalism for broadcast but also increasingly for new and emerging platforms, often first and in new forms.

To develop new forms, RTÉ will invest in a Digital Lab, a short-form production unit. The core focus will be to create compelling and relevant public service content for online audiences, in particular for younger audiences. From long-form digital series and bite-size video shorts to podcasts and VR experiences, the Digital Lab will create fresh new online content for a newly designed RTÉ Player and other online and social media services.

More than anything, it is the stories we tell and the programmes we make and commission that define us. News and current affairs, drama and comedy, sport, entertainment and music, arts and culture, factual, children and young people’s programming will be our key content pillars for the next five years.

Maintaining a focus on high-quality Irish programming and content across these key pillars is RTÉ’s best response to the challenges of a more competitive, increasingly global market with fragmenting audiences and increasing digital disruption.

By focusing on creativity and programming innovation, and by supporting programme makers and journalists, RTÉ draws on its key strengths and ensures that audiences in Ireland continue to have access to distinctively Irish programming. It will help to sustain a vibrant indigenous production and media sector, wherein our key partners are so important to Ireland’s creative sector.

RTÉ will engage with creative talent and creative ideas. As Ireland’s largest public service media organisation, RTÉ must be a home to the best creative talent in the country. Audiences in Ireland have a right to expect RTÉ to constantly find and support new voices, new talents and new perspectives. For those that have enjoyed success, particularly internationally, we must make RTÉ a place for them to routinely return to and work with.

In this regard, Irish television drama will be a key focus in the years ahead. Drama allows us to challenge audiences and to reflect on Ireland’s imperfections, contradictions, culture and people in a way that other forms cannot do – and it resonates, especially with younger audiences, in a way that other programme genres can’t and don’t.

Over the next five years we want to help build a strong Irish drama sector that gives opportunities to some of our most talented producers, writers, directors and actors, and allows us to further develop co-production and international distribution relationships.
Continuing to bolster linear schedules

Content strategy

Developing and investing in the digital offering
We will deepen our understanding of and our engagement with audiences, build new analytical capabilities and put audiences at the centre of our thinking and planning. We will need to transform how we market and build our programme and channel brands; this is essential if we are to continue to be distinctive in an increasingly cluttered digital media environment.

We will have to offer more varied schedules than we do today – balancing different genres and programme types to give real choice for audiences and more variety across channels. To meet the needs of all, we will have to better reflect, on screen and on air, the increasing diversity of modern Ireland.

Our new structure is designed to deliver on this strategy.

Our new Audiences, Channels and Marketing division brings audiences right to the heart of our decision making.

We are building a new Content division that will allow us deliver the most compelling programming and content across our television, radio and digital channels – creating bigger impacts and allowing us to address bigger themes and topics in more engaging ways.

We are integrating all of our operations to streamline our production processes. This will allow us to do new things and meet new audience needs.

We are reallocating resources and changing our structures in our News and Current Affairs division to deliver a digital-first news service alongside our broadcast news and current affairs output.

While we are reducing our overall workforce numbers, we will need to add new skills to our existing pool of real experience and talent. We will have to transform the way we work with others to build new partnerships that offer real public value and impact.

Finally, we will need to make significant investments in new technology and key digital production and distribution infrastructure. These investments will be funded from the proceeds of RTÉ’s sale of land assets in Donnybrook.

It is clear that RTÉ cannot transform itself to meet its future without additional resources.

Underpinning this strategy, we have made some financial assumptions. We have assumed that the licence fee collection system will be reformed by Government within the next couple of years and that the reform will lead to increased public funding from 2019. We have assumed commercial growth each year across the five years. We have also committed to efficiencies through staff reductions, content and service changes, and other measures.
Without this combination of public funding reform, commercial growth and increased efficiencies, RTÉ will not be able to adapt for the future or return to financial stability, nor will it fulfil its remit or provide the scope of services it does currently.

RTÉ has always proven to be both adaptable and durable in the face of change and challenge. It has always believed in its capacity to deliver on the promise it was set up to fulfil over 50 years ago. That confidence, and commitment to creativity, renewal and innovation is essential now if RTÉ is to remain relevant and of real value to audiences into the future.

I believe this strategy sets RTÉ on a new path that ensures it can continue to play a central role at the heart of national life and deliver what you want, when you want it, where you want it.

In a world of ‘fake news’ and misinformation, diminishing public trust and a fragmenting society, and when global media is diluting national and local culture like never before, it is vital that RTÉ continues to play its uniting, unique and invaluable role in Irish life.

I believe that role is worth defending, worth supporting and worth renewing for the next generation.

**Dee Forbes**  
Director-General, RTÉ
In defining its strategy for 2018-2022, RTÉ must consider the interests of people in Ireland. It must also take stock of the dynamics of the media industry and RTÉ’s position as it comes to the end of its first five-year strategy for 2013-2017.
Earlier this year, RTÉ produced its report, Media Landscape in Ireland. It contained a detailed analysis of the external challenges RTÉ faces, including trends in audiences, technology and competition. The key findings are summarised below.

**Audience fragmentation**

Ireland’s population is both growing and ageing and becoming more diverse\(^1\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Category</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population 5m by 2021</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6% growth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New baby boom 0-14s</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>21% in 2021</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adults 55+</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>24% in 2021</strong></td>
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| Non-Irish by birthplace                  |      |      |      |      |
| **2002**                                 | 11%  |      |      |      |
| **2006**                                 |      | 15%  |      |      |
| **2011**                                 |      |      | 17%  |      |
| **2016**                                 |      |      |      | 17%  |

| Non-Roman Catholic / No religion / Not stated |      |      |      |      |
| **2002**                                     | 12%  |      |      |      |
| **2006**                                     |      | 13%  |      |      |
| **2011**                                     |      |      | 15%  |      |
| **2016**                                     |      |      |      | 21%  |

| Total persons with a disability           |      |      |      |      |
| **2002**                                   | 8%   |      |      |      |
| **2006**                                   |      | 9%   |      |      |
| **2011**                                   |      |      | 13%  |      |
| **2016**                                   |      |      |      | 14%  |

\(^1\) Source: Central Statistics Office [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)
Technology trends
Better infrastructure, broadband speeds and lower data rates give people more options to consume content, driving an increase in online media consumption.

High-speed broadband available nationwide by 2020
Residential broadband penetration 90%

Mobile data usage has increased 5 fold since Q4 2013
4G 42% of mobile subscriptions are 4G
Mobile 1st screen for internet

Device Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device Type</th>
<th>All 15+</th>
<th>15-34</th>
<th>All 15+</th>
<th>15-34</th>
<th>All 15+</th>
<th>15-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVR</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tablet device</td>
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<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet TV (VoD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio streaming service</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Source: JNLR/psos MRBI, 2016
People choose to watch, listen and read in ways that are most convenient to them.

Source: TAM Ireland, Total Viewing Habits Study, 2016
Social media is now the most used source for news among adults in the 18-34 age group.2

Social Media Account Ownership
% of social networking owners in Ireland - Jan 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>64%</th>
<th>56%</th>
<th>28%</th>
<th>29%</th>
<th>29%</th>
<th>29%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Daily Usage
% of those who have an account with the listed platforms

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<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>74%</th>
<th>63%</th>
<th>56%</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>33%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Source: Ipsos MRBI Social Networking Tracker, Jan 2017 and Ipsos MRBI Social Messaging Tracker, Jan 2017

Younger audiences are quicker to adopt new services and new ways of consuming content.

<table>
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<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Online Video Viewing Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-7 years</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 years</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 years</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TAM Ireland/ Nielsen TAM, Consolidated data, Nat, Children 4-14, 2016

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2 Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016 (Ireland), News platforms by age group, p. 29
People in Ireland, on average, watch more than three hours of television and listen to more than three and a half hours of radio, every day.

Source: TAM Ireland/Nielsen TAM, 2016 and JNLR/Ipsos MRBI 2016/4

However, the habits and rhythms of people’s daily lives do not change as quickly or as radically as we may think.
**Competition**

Television is no longer an autonomous industry. It has become a battleground for technology, telecommunications and platform companies, with more global ownership of Irish media and distribution than ever before.

New platforms – such as Google, Amazon and Facebook – are increasingly influencing content discovery, news and entertainment, particularly among younger audiences.
Many of their users are foregoing their privacy for access to free content. Brands are flocking to these platforms to connect with so-called ‘millennials’.

Content sits at the centre of the entire media value chain and increased competition and global dynamics are driving hyper-inflation in rights costs.

**Live Sports**
Premium content for live TV competing with Telcos and new entrants.

**Drama**
Is the key genre. It is now the golden age of television drama.

**Mega brand formats**
Show surprising sustainability and classic proven brands are retaining value.

**Acquisitions & entire studio portfolios**
Being bought up wholesale.

**News**
Proliferation and attenuation of news values.

**Local Content**
DOMINATES IN MOST JURISDICTIONS ON TRADITIONAL TV.
Looking ahead

The Irish media environment has never been more competitive. RTÉ is now operating in an environment where new transnational and global competitors are investing significantly in content and technology to gain market share. They are not subject to the same accountability as the regulated media industry and do not have the same focus on distinctive high-quality Irish content or command the same levels of trust as PSM.

The future is not about the demise of linear media in favour of an on-demand world. It is far more complex. RTÉ, like many media organisations across the world, must adapt to survive and thrive in an environment that will remain in flux for some years to come.
RTÉ is in a demanding situation as it comes to the end of its last strategy period.

Much has been achieved over the past five years:

- **Met performance commitments:** Over 90% weekly reach - universality
- **Maintained trust:** 90% of Irish adults feel “RTÉ is valuable to Irish society”
- **Ground-breaking journalism:** Unprecedented election analysis, 2016 centennial year
- **Free and accessible digital content:** Saorview, RTÉ.ie, Player, News Now app
- **EBU peer review** of RTÉ best practices and content
- **NSAI Business Working Responsibly Mark**

RTÉ’s high standards in governance have been independently endorsed in 2017:

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3 RTÉ Health and Reputation Brand Tracker Base, Q1 2017, Red C. (all adults 18+, n= 513)
Public funding model was not reformed

- Not suitable for a smart-device era
- Inefficiency and evasion levels are unacceptable
- Licence fee did not adjust to inflation

RTE’s funding was cut

- Reduced by about €20 million a year in Budget 2011 and 2014
- €79m cumulative funding shortfall relative to plans in last strategy

Acknowledged by three Ministers for Communication

Commercial income was affected by many factors

- Marketing spend going online
- Better resourced competitors
- Brexit referendum
- UK opt-out channels

However, RTÉ faced several challenges in delivering the strategy:

Commercial income was affected by many factors

- Marketing spend going online
- Better resourced competitors
- Brexit referendum
Overcoming these challenges has come at a cost, both in terms of the content RTÉ wished to produce and RTÉ’s financial stability:

- Lack of investment in content
- Income static and costs growing
- Online and capital investment curtailed and delayed
- Spending reduced in independent sector
- Financial performance challenging
- 2016 net deficit €19.6m
- 2017 & 2018 extremely challenging
RTÉ receives significant levels of public funding and is, rightly, subject to extensive regulatory and governance oversight:

Three consecutive annual reviews found funding was inadequate

The BAI evaluates adequacy of public funding to RTÉ

Funding was inadequate to deliver 2013-2017 strategy

RTÉ was subject to two independent reviews

RTÉ maximises commercial opportunities

No further scope for efficiencies

Capital investment needs attention

The Joint Oireachtas Committee (JOC) on the Future Funding of Public Service Broadcasting published its report on 28 November 2017. Following extensive stakeholder and public consultations and research, the committee concluded that:

- The provision of balanced, impartial, well-resourced and independent public broadcasting services is fundamental to Ireland’s democratic society.
- The existing funding model is redundant and anachronistic and requires reform.
- Short-term solutions are necessary to stabilise the funding for public service media.

RTÉ welcomes the report’s 10 clear recommendations on how the public funding model should be extensively reformed over the short and longer term.

4 http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/bineachtaibusiness/committees_list/locae/reports/
A new ‘One RTÉ’

RTÉ is radically restructuring itself to deliver on this strategy. This organisational renewal is intended to achieve:

• A more distinctive, powerful and cohesive brand – enhancing perceptions of breadth and quality within a highly competitive landscape
• A more responsive portfolio of content offerings – reacting to evolving audience needs, fostered by an ‘audience first’ mindset
• A more collaborative approach to content creation – both in teams working together across services and external partnerships, particularly with the independent sector
• A digital organisation – innovating in adopting digital first while bolstering quality, output and engagement with linear services
• A more agile and multi-skilled workforce – with the capability to seamlessly deliver to both digital and linear services and to work more effectively as one organisation
• A more efficient organisation – with better workflows, using existing resources more effectively and creatively, avoiding duplication of efforts and delivering operating cost savings

Functions will come together in a new ‘One RTÉ’ structure.

RTÉ will realise the new ‘One RTÉ’ structure through the following actions:

• The Audience, Channels and Marketing division will combine television, radio and online channels, as well as marketing and audience insights to bring audiences to the heart of RTÉ’s decision making.
• The Content division will allow RTÉ to deliver the most compelling programming across television, radio and digital channels – creating bigger impacts and allowing RTÉ to address bigger themes and topics in more engaging ways.
• A new integrated Operations division will streamline production processes, allowing RTÉ to do new things and meet new audience needs.
• News and Current Affairs resources will be reallocated and structures changed to deliver a digital-first news service alongside broadcast news and current affairs output.
• Overall workforce numbers are being reduced through a voluntary redundancy scheme and some new skills will be added to RTÉ’s existing pool of experience and talent.
• RTÉ will create a more collaborative working environment and some teams will be re-located across the Donnybrook campus.
• RTÉ will transform the way it works with others and build new partnerships that offer real public value and impact.
• Significant investments will be made in new technology, digital production and distribution infrastructure.
• The restructuring and related investments will be funded from the proceeds of RTÉ’s sale of land assets in Donnybrook.

RTÉ will fully transition to the new structure in 2018.
• The ‘One RTÉ’ structure was announced in March 2017.
• The ‘One RTÉ’ leadership team was completed and the next level structure was announced in August 2017.
• Appointments, where required, will be made in Q1 2018.
• Reporting against the new structure will begin in 2018.
Enablers of RTÉ’s strategy

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

Audiences first

- On-air diversity and inclusion
- Younger audiences
- Audiences in education
- Life stage audience segments
- Loyal audiences
- Accessibility
- RTÉ in the community
- Audiences abroad

Connecting - how, when and where

- Television platforms
- Radio platforms
- Connected platforms
- New ways to engage
- Performing groups
- Archives

Quality content

- Arts and culture
- Children and young people
- Drama and comedy
- Entertainment and music
- Factual
- Irish language
- News and current affairs
- Sport
- Special events
Shifts in the media landscape have provided audiences with unprecedented content choices. Media consumption patterns have changed and will remain in flux for years. RTÉ must adapt to compete and will adjust its strategic direction to:

- Serve linear audiences while adopting digital first
- Know, engage with and better understand audiences
- Reflect Ireland’s diversity on and off air
- Innovate with a new model for short-form content
- Expand and deepen its creative partnerships

To achieve this, RTÉ’s strategy focuses on three key elements:

- Putting the audience first
- Making high-quality content
- Allowing audiences to connect with RTÉ content how, where and when they want

This strategy puts the audience first. RTÉ wishes to captivate audiences and celebrate our country’s rich diversity. Knowing audiences in Ireland, reflecting them and engaging with them is crucial. RTÉ will focus on attracting younger audiences while retaining other traditionally loyal audiences.

Locally produced content needs to be protected to ensure that Ireland continues to have a vibrant creative sector that reflects Irish culture, stories and society. The content priorities embedded in this strategy are to offer greater variety and diversity, including long and short form, live and on-demand; and to increase partnerships with Ireland’s creative sector.
RTÉ wants to give people more choice and control as to how, when and where they connect with and consume its content. RTÉ will evolve its range of services in line with audience needs and available resources to fulfil a two-pronged approach of serving linear audiences, while adopting digital first.

Delivering the strategy depends on several key enablers:
• Having a deep understanding of audiences in Ireland
• Driving creativity and innovation in content making
• Expanding partnerships with the independent sector
• Creating opportunities for staff and attracting new and diverse talent
• Improving operations and technology to become more efficient, collaborative and agile
• Increasing funding for public service media content

This strategy and RTÉ’s financial sustainability are contingent on several financial assumptions. These include the successful implementation of the new ‘One RTÉ’ structure and an increase in public funding that includes reform of the television licence fee system.

**Indicators of success**
RTÉ will evaluate its progress in implementing its strategy through a range of indicators that demonstrate its impact on Irish society. These indicators will be continuously assessed, ensuring they evolve and change to meet RTÉ’s requirements as it strives to satisfy audience needs and respond to the ever-changing media marketplace.
Audiences first

On-air diversity and inclusion
Younger audiences
Audiences in education
Life stage audience segments
Loyal Audiences
Accessibility
RTE in the community
Audiences abroad

While RTÉ enjoys universal reach, it is a challenge to attract younger audiences and retain other traditionally loyal audiences. To know, reflect and engage with its audiences, RTÉ will:
• Reflect the nation’s diversity both on and off air
• Connect with the many communities of Ireland
• Open a two-way channel with audiences in education
• Continue to serve those with sensory disabilities
• Be a connection to home for the Irish abroad and represent Ireland to those interested in Irish culture

In putting the audience first, RTÉ recognises that:
• Life stage is the key differentiator of media needs
• It must improve the relevance of its content for all audiences
• Perceptions of RTÉ One are key to influencing perceptions of RTE overall
• Viewers can find the tone of RTÉ One heavy and serious, and would prefer more variety and diversity

RTÉ plays a unique and valuable role in Irish society. Its reach is universal, with more than 90% of adults using one or more RTÉ services every week. RTÉ’s television and radio services are consumed in significant numbers across a wide range of genres, as illustrated by the top 20 programme rankings. RTÉ One and RTÉ Radio 1 are the most watched and listened to channels in the country, while RTÉ’s online and mobile services are used by almost half of Irish adults each week.

RTÉ is one of the most trusted organisations in the country, most notably for its news and current affairs content. More than 80% of adults consistently agree that RTÉ “enables me to connect with national events” and “is an important part of Irish life”.

However, behind these strengths there are challenges. Younger adults lead the trends towards online, on-demand and short-form content, and particularly away from linear television. Audience profiles of RTÉ’s linear services tend to skew older than the overall national population.

Weekly reach for RTÉ overall among under 35s has shown some slippage over recent years and RTÉ’s share on both radio and television has declined over the past decade.

In RTÉ’s view, the future is not about the demise of linear audiences in favour of an on-demand world. Rather it will be a blend of live viewing and listening across multiple devices complemented by anytime, anywhere, on-demand consumption. This is fuelled by demand for high-quality content, where locally produced programmes and journalism continue to have strong resonance with audiences.

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5 Source: RTÉ Brand Tracker 2014-16
6 Sources: B&A Digital Tracker (July 2016), TAM Ireland Ltd (FY 2016), JNLR Ipsos MRBI, 2016/4
7 Sources: TAM Ireland/Nielsen TAM, Consolidated data, 24hr, Mon-Sun. JNLR Ipsos MRBI, 2016/4, 24hr weekday share
Research commissioned by RTÉ has shown that life stage is the key differentiator of the media needs of Irish people. These life stages, or phases in people’s lives, are drivers of attitudes and behaviours. They are influenced by dependent children in the household and the age of those children, followed by a person’s age, gender and social class.

Media needs vary across distinct audience segments. There is a spectrum ranging from wishing to relax, unwind and escape, to wishing to be empowered and up-to-date with the latest news, but all segments wish to be entertained. Media consumption continues to fulfil more personal needs such as offering some precious ‘me time’, spending time with family and providing companionship.

Research also shows that RTÉ One is the single strongest influencer of the public’s perception of RTÉ.

RTÉ wishes to reflect, capture and analyse the pulse of the nation through its content. It will:
- Take a more outward-looking approach to better understand audience needs beyond demographics
- Further explore what impacts their lives
- Personalise and curate how they experience RTÉ

See the Audiences Insights section on page 42 for further information.

On-air diversity and inclusion
Diversity and inclusion is at the heart of RTÉ’s vision. RTÉ aims to become a leader in diversity and inclusion, both on and off air. This will necessitate a change in RTÉ’s content and output, as well as in the organisation itself and its culture. RTÉ will:
- Invest in staff training
- Measure diversity on air
- Develop a new generation of current affairs talent
- Engage with and listen to minority audiences

The population of Ireland has changed significantly over the past two decades. Almost a quarter of the population is aged over 55 and the number of children is also growing. Ireland’s towns and particularly cities have become more ethnically mixed. More of us are identifying as having some form of disability. Recent social changes have increased awareness of religious diversity, sexual orientation and gender diversity, while the ongoing impact of the recession and the homelessness crisis has shown a society that has grown more unequal and polarised.

In developing this strategy, RTÉ engaged extensively with stakeholders, staff and external diversity specialists. Most fundamentally, RTÉ’s programmes and content will more authentically reflect modern Irish society and appeal to Ireland’s changing population.

RTÉ in the community
RTÉ is involved in a wide range of national, regional and local events that enable it to engage more directly with its audience. These range from the British Telecom Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition, the St Patrick’s Day Festival, Bloom, the RTÉ All-Ireland Drama Festival, the Rose of Tralee, the National Ploughing Championships, Culture Night, the Cork Film Festival and Mojocon.

Through RTÉ’s outreach scheme, 42 bespoke groups from second- and third-level education, inner-city social projects, overseas visitors and civic groups were hosted on site in 2016.

RTÉ makes its own contribution to Irish life and culture through the very successful RTÉ Supporting the Arts scheme, which promotes attendance at grassroots cultural festivals and events by providing valuable broadcast airtime and social media support. In 2016 RTÉ supported more than 100 such events, with an estimated commercial value of €1 million of airtime granted to arts organisations across the country.

RTÉ aims to strengthen its community engagement across Ireland through direct partnership, editorial reflection and participation in a diverse range of events. It will:
- Connect with and reflect the many communities of Ireland, whether they are based on geography, language or common interest
- Engage with stakeholders, the Audience Council and the public
- Provide a diverse programme of nationwide events and broadcasts
- Actively support community and civic initiatives and a national arts support strategy
- Audit its activities across the regions
- co-ordinate all community, outreach and education activities across the organisation
- Play a leadership role in terms of standards of good corporate citizenship

Audiences in education
RTÉ makes a significant contribution to learning and public education in Ireland through radio, television and online content, as well as a wide range of non-broadcast educational initiatives and partnerships. Much of this story is untold. RTÉ will conduct an audit to scope its educational activities and review how it creates and re-purposes content with education value across all genres/platforms.

RTÉ will open a two-way channel with audiences in education, both in the formal education sector and informal life-long education. It will target key younger audiences and embed RTÉ content in their daily activities to increases their awareness of RTÉ. The strategy will explore themes such as music, the Irish language, the archives, media literacy and
Audiences first

media practice. The strategy will also help fulfil RTÉ’s mandate in respect of accessibility, diversity and the promotion of the Irish language.

In addition, RTÉ will establish a website (RTÉ Learn) to showcase educational content, partnerships and technologies. It will be a ‘single point of contact’ for educators available via desktop, mobile and tablet, and will be accessible to all members of the community.

Accessibility
In 2014, RTÉ became the first and only Irish broadcaster to introduce audio description (AD), providing AD for the blind and visually impaired to its broadcast output.

In 2016 RTÉ developed an Irish Sign Language (ISL) hub on RTÉ Player. This offers more than 100 titles at any time to the ISL community. It is both a programme catch-up and archive service that is constantly refreshed.

Over the past five years, RTÉ has met the vast majority of its access commitments, despite overall levels of curtailed investment within RTÉ.

Given Ireland’s aging and increasing population, demand for access services is likely to increase. RTÉ will continue to innovate to meet the needs of RTÉ’s diverse audience, including those with sensory disabilities.

RTÉ will:
• Appoint a Head of Access Services who will be responsible for auditing current levels of resource and work practices, exploring the scope for more effective use of modern technology (e.g. voice recognition) and identifying the most expedient ways to deliver access services in both linear and digital output
• Engage on an ongoing basis with relevant stakeholders and industry experts
• Demonstrate leadership in providing national media access services across a broad range of programme genres to include live content, and indigenous and acquired content.
• Enhance the dedicated ISL hub on RTÉ Player over the lifetime of the strategy.

Audiences abroad
RTÉ is mandated to deliver a television and radio service to the Irish abroad. It also fully recognises the intrinsic value in delivering this service to the many Irish people abroad who use RTÉ’s services to connect to news, events and entertainment from home, as well as to those interested in Ireland.

The Irish abroad represent a diverse group of people, from emigrants who have plans to return home to the Irish people who have made a permanent home abroad. Across this spectrum, RTÉ is an important and often vital connection to home. RTÉ has a significant role to play in bringing Irish culture to the wider world and representing our achievements to global citizens everywhere, while also developing a special relationship with the Irish diaspora.

Audiences abroad have extensive access to RTÉ content through:
• RTÉ’s online services (RTÉ.ie, RTÉ Player, RTÉ News Now app, RTÉ Radio Player)
• Live radio, live streamed radio and radio catch-up – while the LW radio service will be phased out, plans are underway for a UK DAB station for the Irish abroad
• RTÉ’s dedicated online services for the Irish abroad (GAAGO and RTÉ Player International)
• RTÉ’s social media profiles

RTÉ will be a connection to home for the Irish abroad for news, national events, entertainment and culture. It will also represent Ireland to those abroad interested in Irish culture.
Content that responds to audience needs is at the core of everything RTÉ does. This is based on an ambition to:

- Captivate Irish audiences with the highest quality and most compelling programmes
- Explore and celebrate the ever-changing experience, diversity and complexity of modern life in Ireland
- Interrogate the issues that affect and concern us all right now

To achieve this, RTÉ has identified content priorities, where it will:

- Tell Ireland’s story across all genres
- Offer a more varied content mix
- Host regular cross-RTÉ events
- Come live more often from around the country

These priorities are underpinned by the principles that:

- Creativity and innovation should underpin all content creation
- Content should be relevant to all audiences
- RTÉ must focus on reconnecting with younger audiences
- Peak-time content will be protected where content choices are required

The ‘One RTÉ’ structure will improve how RTÉ can best serve audience needs. The plans that follow reflect RTÉ’s new consolidated genre pillars. These are:

- Arts and culture
- Children and young people
- Drama and comedy
- Entertainment and music
- Factual
- Irish language
- News and current affairs
- Sport

**Arts and culture**

RTÉ has a central role to play in discovering and enabling creativity and cultural expression in Ireland, and embracing the uniqueness and diversity of Irish life. RTÉ will discover, nurture, champion, explain and celebrate creativity in all its forms and will renew and re-imagine its approach to arts and culture.

To achieve this, RTÉ will:

- Appoint its first Group Head of Arts and Culture
- Showcase arts and culture across all platforms
- Expand and deepen its creative partnerships
- Provide major cross-platform events that promote arts and culture
- Support the wider creative community

**Children and young people**

RTÉ seeks to explore and reflect the exciting and changing world in which children and teenagers are growing up. It will see through their eyes and their experiences from birth up to 18 years. RTÉ recognises that children’s media consumption patterns are changing dramatically. It will ensure its content for this diverse and growing group is available where children wish to access it.

RTÉ will:

- Provide an innovative and varied mix of children’s content
- Support domestic animation
- Enhance understanding of children to provide content where and how they consume it
Drama and comedy
RTÉ drama tells powerful stories, showing courage for adventure and challenge in an age of fear and scepticism. RTÉ comedy reflects Irish society and its idiosyncrasies as well as contemporary culture. Through both genres, RTÉ will take creative risks, develop talent and support Irish creatives.

RTÉ will:
• Appoint a Group Head of Drama and Comedy
• Reflect Irish culture through increased drama
• Entertain audiences with increased Irish comedy
• Support Irish talent in these genres

Entertainment and music
RTÉ will create a more diverse mix of entertainment content that is enjoyable, unexpected, engaging, impactful and relevant to audiences’ life experiences. It will be savvy, sharp-witted and available wherever audiences are. Entertainment programmes will also bring families and communities together for shared viewing experiences.

RTÉ will continue to play a key role in bringing new music performers and originators, as well as established talents, to the wider public. It will showcase Irish music and promote music discovery through live events and innovating new ways of curating music.

To achieve these aims, RTÉ will:
• Appoint a Group Head of Entertainment and Music
• Diversify to a more impactful entertainment mix
• Deepen audience engagement with music, especially Irish music

Factual
This diverse genre comprises documentaries; education, science and natural history; lifestyle and daytime television; and religious output.

RTÉ will appoint a Group Head of Factual to foster creative partnerships and deliver the highest levels of quality and creativity while contributing to a shift in tone on RTÉ’s schedules by increasing lighter popular output and delivering more cross-RTÉ event-based strands.

Documentaries
Through great storytelling, RTÉ explores the ever-changing experience, diversity and complexity of modern life in Ireland and documents the people and places that make Ireland what it is today. RTÉ will:
• Continue to deliver both the high-impact television documentaries that get the nation talking and the critically acclaimed Documentary on One from RTÉ Radio 1
• Develop a more diverse range of presenter talent from the worlds of acting, drama and comedy, to provide a lighter tone for some documentaries

Education, science and natural history
RTÉ produces a range of education, science and natural history content with strong, non-linear appeal that is attractive to editorial and funding partners within and around the education sector. RTÉ will:
• Continue to broaden the parameters of these genres, developing more cross-RTÉ, event-based initiatives
• Focus on adding greater value to the post-transmission legacy of this content and to stimulate and contribute to public policy, debate and education.

Lifestyle and daytime television
RTÉ focuses on consumer and human-interest themes that engage the audience with programmes that entertain, inform and resonate. RTÉ will:
• Partner with the independent sector to develop innovative formats that contribute to a change in tone and greater accessibility of RTÉ’s television schedules
• Expand its daytime output, offering engaging content for audiences during the day

Religion
RTÉ provides a strong, cohesive, cross-platform offering of religious and faith-based programming. RTÉ will:
• Reflect the religious cultural life and diversity of Ireland through documentary, observational series and a range of other formats
• Continue to enable access to live worship, exploring new ways of providing this service

Irish language
RTÉ seeks to bring the Irish language into the heart of everything it does by:
• Integrating the Irish language naturally and seamlessly into all RTÉ’s channels and services
• Creating quality content and telling great stories through the Irish language
• Fulfilling the needs of all Irish-language audiences, from learners to fluent speakers
RTÉ will:
- Become the home of innovation in Irish-language media
- Create a dynamic environment for Irish-language content creation, making the best use of the talent, skills and creativity of Irish-language capable staff
- Strengthen partnership arrangements with TG4\(^8\) that will enhance the Irish-language content provision by both organisations

**News and current affairs**
RTÉ News and Current Affairs aims to become a genuinely ‘digital-first’ news organisation. It will build on its traditional broadcast strengths of original storytelling, hosting national debate and reporting from all of the island of Ireland. RTÉ will translate those strengths for an audience who may not consume RTÉ’s news and current affairs content on traditional platforms. RTÉ aims to expand the reach of news and current affairs services by creating digital-only content and targeting a younger audience, while maintaining existing audiences.

RTÉ will:
- Re-imagine its services by migrating some content away from linear broadcast to on-demand services
- Produce more non-linear content that will be available to audiences on-demand on RTÉ and through social media
- Maintain existing core news programmes and bulletins on television and radio
- Continue to hold those in authority to account and host the national conversation through its current affairs content

**Sport**
RTÉ Sport’s mission is to bring national games, national teams and major events (both international and domestic) to audiences on all available platforms in an innovative, informative, entertaining and cost-effective way. RTÉ Sport will continue to strive to be the go-to media outlet for sporting events that bring the nation together. It will deliver and connect with audiences, regardless of the platforms they chose. RTÉ Sport will continue to provide quality, trusted sports programming and journalism, ensuring excellence and creativity.

RTÉ will:
- Bring the nation together through sporting events central to Irish culture
- Offer major sporting events of significant importance to Irish audiences
- Complement and embrace coverage beyond major sporting events
- Provide breadth and depth, notably through its daily output

**Special events**
RTÉ has always committed to delivering the highest possible quality coverage of shared moments of history. It is RTÉ’s role to provide access to the audience and serve a shared public purpose. It represents a resource and policy commitment innate to PSM.

The Decade of Centenaries programme commenced in 2012 and initially focused on the many significant centenaries occurring over the period 2012-2016. The coming five years are equally important as we remember the 1918 election, the foundation of Dáil Éireann in 1919, the War of Independence, the foundation of the Irish state and the Civil War.

In addition, 2018 will see a referendum on the Eighth Amendment, a likely Papal Visit to Ireland and a possible presidential election. The first six months of 2019 will see the centenary of the first Dáil in January and then Brexit in March, when the UK formally leaves the European Union (EU). There will also be local and European elections in the early summer.

**Content creation**
RTÉ’s content objectives can be summarised as follows:
- To develop richer and more diverse programming and content
- To drive creativity, learning and innovation – internally and across the media sector
- To find and develop new talent and new voices

RTÉ’s programming is created in-house or commissioned from the independent production sector. It is developed and funded either wholly by RTÉ, or through co-funding or co-production partnership arrangements.

For in-house production, the new ‘One RTÉ’ structure will allow for greater collaboration, flexibility, creativity and innovation to deliver impactful public service content through multi-platform initiatives. The structure will also deliver efficiencies, most notably from the new single operations function, which will support and enhance creative workflows.

The Irish independent production sector is collectively RTÉ’s largest creative partner. Over the course of this strategy, RTÉ wants to commission more and intends to spend at least 50% of the proceeds of public funding reform on independent commissions. This would represent a substantive increase in RTÉ’s overall spend in the independent production sector.

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8 TG4 is the Irish-language television channel of the Irish-language public service broadcaster Téilifís na Gaeilge

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RTÉ will evolve its services to meet changing audience needs and exploit new opportunities. These plans are underpinned by the principles that content and services are:

- Universally available to Irish audiences
- Available in a way that is convenient to audiences
- Branded and easy to find and navigate
- Delivered to the audience at the highest quality available

Services will be accessible on multiple devices and platforms to give people more choice of how, when and where they connect with and consume content.

RTÉ will require agility to launch new services and discontinue the way certain channels or genres are made available to audiences. The new Audience, Channels and Marketing division will play a pivotal role.

**Television**

RTÉ will optimise relationships with free- and pay-television platforms and networks to reach every home in Ireland and offer high-quality video and audio. RTÉ will ensure its channels and content are prioritised and findable in electronic programme guides (EPGs), and navigation and discovery algorithms, and that the fair share of value is attributed to RTÉ. As platform interfaces evolve, RTÉ will work with platforms to enhance the user experience and findability of its services.

Saorview is Ireland’s largest television platform and is in 860,000 homes9, of which 191,000 have Saorview only. RTÉ has partnered with Freesat in the UK to develop a new connected product, Saorview Connect. It is designed to be connected to both an aerial (to receive the terrestrial channels) and to broadband (to access catch-up and on-demand content).

RTÉ will keep its other services and brands under review and aligned to audience needs and consumption patterns, the intent of RTÉ’s content strategies and available resources.

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9 Source: TAM Ireland / Nielsen TAM — Establishment Survey, July 2017
Radio
It is expected that FM will continue to be the primary means for consuming radio in Ireland. Further development of DAB+ in Ireland would require regulatory involvement and collaboration with the commercial sector.

Podcasts and streaming offer more convenience and RTÉ will continue to develop and distribute relevant audio content for audiences.

RTÉ's LW radio service in the UK will be phased out. Plans are underway for an RTÉ radio DAB station in the UK.

Connected platforms
As audience consumption increases on connected devices and via over-the-top (OTT) platforms, RTÉ will prioritise platforms that enable it to have a direct relationship with viewers, listeners and users and offer enhanced experiences.

RTÉ will continue to develop partnerships with Irish content owners to provide an unrivalled platform (e.g. RTÉ Player and GAAGO) for Irish content to reach a broad range of audiences, both in Ireland and abroad.

RTÉ recognises the importance of social and distributed media as a means to access news, discover content, and connect and engage with younger audiences. It will continue to work with social platforms on a mutually beneficial basis.

RTÉ Orchestras and Choirs
RTÉ will continue to be the leading provider of orchestral music in the country. RTÉ has commenced a review of its orchestral provision through broad consultation with relevant stakeholders. The review will make recommendations on ways to ensure the long-term vibrancy, quality and sustainability of RTÉ's orchestral output.

RTÉ Archives
RTÉ holds the country's oldest and largest archives of original audio and moving-image recordings, as well as the largest library of commercial music, a nationally significant photographic collection and an extensive repository of company records.

The archive grows approximately 7% a year and is a core business asset for RTÉ – 27% of all news content is sourced from RTÉ Archives, with 40,000 video archive clips incorporated in new programming each year.

However, the curtailed level of investment has resulted in a technical and physical infrastructure that lags far behind industry norms. Older collections of some 500,000 hours are not yet digitised. Obsolescence and decay of physical assets can make legacy formats unplayable. Without much-needed investment in digital infrastructure, archive material will be lost forever.

RTÉ will shortly commence an externally led review to include consultation with key external and internal stakeholders. It will assess international best practice, consider issues such as digitisation and documentation of the legacy archive and increasing archive access, potential partnerships, and future funding and governance options.

New ways to engage audiences
RTÉ will explore and experiment with new ways to develop, access and distribute content with broadcasters, networks, platform owners and technology companies. Emerging technologies (e.g. voice recognition and the Internet of Things) will lead to changes in how audiences access content. RTÉ will assess these emerging content distribution technologies and will adapt accordingly. This will require investment in content, rights and enhanced product features and experiences.

RTÉ will use greater personalisation, improved content recommendation and enhanced customisation to deliver an experience that is more relevant.
Enablers of RTÉ’s strategy

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.

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

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.
RTÉ adopted a robust, collaborative and outward-looking approach when developing its strategy. It engaged with its audience and consulted with a wide range of stakeholders.

More than 300 staff members engaged in various ways – contributing to and leading working groups, participating in workshops, submitting suggestions and attending staff presentations.

The RTÉ Executive extensively considered, debated and assessed options before making decisions and the RTÉ Board was closely engaged in developing the strategy.

RTÉ has submitted its strategy to the BAI and its consultants for review. This will inform the BAI’s report to the Minister in the New Year.

The Minister and Cabinet will then consider the BAI’s report in determining the future public funding for RTÉ.
Development of RTÉ Strategy 2018 - 2022

July 2017

- Broadcasting bill general scheme published June

- Joint Oireachtas Committee (JOC) consideration of future funding of public service broadcasting

- BAI/consultant meetings

- RTÉ staff involvement & working groups

- RTÉ all-staff sessions

- Key RTÉ Executive and Board meetings

- RTÉ opening statement to JOC

- RTÉ's submission to JOC

- JOC Public Forum 'Future Broadcast'

- JOC report to the Minister

- BAI report and recommendations to Minister

- External Environment Review

- Staff Suggestions

- Audience Workshops

- Dublin, Galway, Cork

- Vision Workshops

- EBU Peer Review

- RTÉ Media Landscape Report

- RTÉ strategy 2018-2022 submitted to BAI

- October

- Stakeholder Consultation

- Service and Content Review

- Content and Support Strategies

- RTÉ Executive team announced

- Strategy launch

- Detailed planning, launch and implementation of 2018-2022 strategy

- Ministerial review and Government response on public service broadcasting funding

- Transition to new ‘One RTÉ’ structure

- Date TBC
The media sector is undergoing significant change. The accelerating innovation of today is challenging long-established patterns. Global platforms are increasingly influential, particularly among younger audiences. As broadband speeds and coverage improve, and devices become smarter, the effects on Irish media will be more rapid and profound.

And with change, comes opportunity, the chance to re-imagine, renew and evolve. And with this strategy, that is what RTÉ is intent on doing.

RTÉ is responding by transforming for the next generation, so that it continues to play the central role in Irish life, culture and discourse that it has across the years.
Through this strategy, RTÉ will re-imagine PSM so that it works for and engages everyone, wherever they are. RTÉ will invest in high-quality Irish programming and online content. News and current affairs, drama and comedy, sport, entertainment and music, arts and culture, factual, and children and young people’s programming will be its key content pillars. Innovation and partnership, particularly with the independent sector, will be RTÉ’s lifeblood.

RTÉ cannot sustainably transform itself to achieve this strategy without additional resources. Its success therefore is contingent on a range of factors including funding reform, and national policy support.

Ireland deserves to have a public service media of sufficient scale, quality and relevance that can meet the needs of all its citizens and stand among its international peers. RTÉ looks forward to delivering against its unique public service mandate over the next five years and beyond, to fulfil this vision.