

2025 Guidelines for Tourism Ireland's International Programming Ireland Fund

Round 1 Application Deadline: **Wednesday 26 February 2025, 3pm GMT**

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The Programming Ireland Fund is an investment fund designed to assist Television content producers to create high-quality programming profiling the island of Ireland and its unique attractions for distribution to international audiences. These guidelines are intended to assist producers in making a submission to the fund, which will be open for two rounds in 2025: in February and in June. For updates and more information on Tourism Ireland see www.tourismireland.com

TOURISM IRELAND'S KEY OBJECTIVES

High-quality and innovative broadcast projects profiling the island of Ireland which feature one or all of the following:

- **Discovery and exploration – new unique experiences to appeal to mind and spirit**
- **Meaningful connection to place and people – local authentic experiences**
- **Meaningful connection to nature – immersion and rejuvenation by the natural beauty of the island of Ireland**

Tourism Ireland invites applications which can fulfil these objectives under the following criteria:

- Well-developed projects with broad appeal, with identified broadcaster/s in Tourism Ireland's Key Markets; and/or a distributor.
- Submissions can apply for funding of up to a maximum of €200,000 per project.
- Funding applied for must be under 50% of the project budget.
- Multi-episode TV series proposals are preferable (30's and 60's), in keeping with commissioning trends, but strong/compellingly themed one-offs, or feature-length documentaries (with potential to deliver as 2 x 1-hour docs) are also welcome to apply. The attached broadcaster should define the optimum number of episodes and duration.
- Genres with a fresh and authentic destination focus are of particular interest. However, the scheme has a broad interest in a range of unscripted genres and creative approaches that entertain and engage. These include (but are not limited to) documentary, doc series, travelogue, lifestyle, features, popular factual, factual entertainment, cultural, history and specialist factual.
- Other genres such as challenge-based game shows are welcome to apply, provided they meet the fund criteria and aspirations to showcase Ireland, i.e., they should not be studio-based (with reduced opportunity to profile Ireland).

- Existing formats or popular returning series which have the potential to be based authentically in Ireland may also apply. These projects require an international broadcaster attached at submission stage.
- Where relevant, submissions must demonstrate that they have identified and attached on-screen talent that is both appealing and well known to the intended international broadcaster and audience. Projects with unknown talent in that territory are less likely to be funded through this scheme.
- Projects intended for established international broadcast channels that can provide slot averages, audience reach and impact metrics will be prioritised. However, projects intended for SVODs and streamers are also invited, provided they can demonstrate clear projections on the potential audience reach and impact of the project.
- Projects with a confirmed distributor and a defined international distribution strategy that include Tourism Ireland's desired territories will also be prioritised. Evidence of confirmed distributor investment in the finance plan is an advantage.
- Projects must demonstrate evidence of international market support and commercial viability including onward sales. The project must have at least one broadcaster identified/confirmed in US, GB, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Nordics or Canada. Additionally, projects with confirmed sales or distribution interest will be prioritised.
- Existing high-end content that can travel overseas with the appropriate re-versioning is also of potential interest.
- It is essential that confirmed financing be in place with clear evidence of market support. This can be secured from a broadcaster or from a combination of broadcaster(s), sales agent, distributor, publisher, established funders such as Screen Ireland, CnaM Sound & Vision Fund, Creative Europe etc.
- While all talent does not need to be attached at the time of application, those which require key talent such as a celebrity or presenter should aim to have their commitment in principle secured to demonstrate viability.
- Celebrity/Artist/Expert-led content tends to work well, but it must involve internationally recognised talent. Documentaries and cultural content including music, literary and film themes with a strong sense of place are also of interest.
- Projects may be made in any relevant language but the application must be made through English.
- Tourism Ireland may consider a follow-on series of a project that can clearly demonstrate the success of the first series and present a strong rationale for support. Reality genres such as adventure are welcome, provided they meet the brief.
- Tourism Ireland aims to select a balanced slate of projects reflecting the key interest areas and this may impact on awards made.

The fund to date has supported over 50 high-quality TV projects including celebrity led travelogues such as Julia Bradbury's Irish Journey for Channel 4; culture travelogues including Ireland with Michael by Wexford House for PBS or Titanic, Our Secret Histories for Channel 4; Home of Halloween currently in production for ARTE, nature documentaries such as Ireland's Wild Islands by Crossing the Line Productions for ARTE, Smithsonian, SVT Sweden, game show formats such as Het Perfecte Plaatje by ITV Netherlands for RTL4.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Experienced independent production companies (domestic, international or a co-production) with a demonstrable track record in producing high-quality programming for TV broadcasters outside the island of Ireland are invited to apply to this scheme for funding. A producer/production company may submit up to two projects for consideration only.

NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- TV drama or scripted submissions.
- Crime-based themes.
- News or current affairs genres.
- Political or agenda-based narratives.
- Animation submissions.
- Projects that are exclusively studio-based.
- Projects intended exclusively for theatrical release.
- Projects with a niche focus that may have reduced audience appeal / reach.
- Projects seeking sponsorship funding are not invited for this funding initiative.
- Proposals with a broadcaster ad / spot funding requirement are not invited for this funding initiative.
- Projects intended exclusively for broadcast on the island of Ireland.
- Concepts centred on themes that could be perceived as controversial or have the potential to reflect negatively on the island of Ireland.
- Projects that cannot demonstrate either international broadcaster or distributor commitment.
- Underdeveloped projects at concept stage.

HOW TO APPLY?

Development Executive Colin Pauser-Cowman has been appointed to manage the application process on behalf of Tourism Ireland. Complete the application form available via www.tourismireland.com and submit with the requirements outlined by 3.00pm on Wednesday 26th February 2025 and email to programmingirelandfund@tourismireland.com. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Timings for the June 2025 funding deadline will be announced later in 2025.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING (Overview)

- Tourism Ireland may invest up to 50% of the global production budget of the production up to a maximum of €200,000. Funding offered may be less than the maximum available/request made.
- The conditions of Tourism Ireland's contribution are subject to contractual agreement between both parties.
- Deliverables include clips and images of the project to be made available for use by Tourism Ireland to promote the programme in-market.
- The Investment will include a 5% Licence Fee (which is subject to VAT) for use of clips / images 'Deliverables'.
- Investments may be recoupable on a % basis of net profits from ongoing sales of the project, on a cascade basis after all fees and expenses are paid.
- Payments will be made in 3 – 4 stages/tranches as the project progresses and are subject to contractual confirmations and/or deliverables in each case.
- Successful applicants will be responsible for sourcing talent, developing the concept and producing the content in consultation with Tourism Ireland, as well as facilitating international distribution.
- Tourism Ireland will not be in a position to resource day-to-day support for the project. The production team will need to have sufficient knowledge of the island of Ireland or collaborate with an island of Ireland based co-production company or location manager to assist the production independently.
- Travel costs need to be included in the application for funding & will not be supported with additional budget.
- Successful applicants must proceed to production and complete financial closing/contracting within six months of the offer.
- Tourism Ireland may require that any additional third-party legal costs incurred by Tourism Ireland to make the investment are treated as a budget item of the project.
- Tourism Ireland will prioritise projects submitted in this call-out for investment, in the unlikely event that any successful projects are unable to complete contracting, Tourism Ireland may consider investing in new projects that clearly meet the criteria outlined.
- Offers made by Tourism Ireland are subject to availability of funding and decisions by Tourism Ireland are final.
- Tourism Ireland reserves the right to make changes to these guidelines.

HOW WILL WE SELECT PROJECTS?

Projects submitted will be assessed by a panel, with selection criteria based on:

- Concept and content.

- Destination focus.
- Broadcast/distributor commitment in a preferred/relevant market.
- Potential audience reach is extremely important.
- Viability to progress based on financing and talent confirmed.
- Producer's evidenced track record of placing high-quality content on international broadcast channels.

Tourism Ireland will endeavour to make funding decisions in a timely fashion, ideally within six to eight weeks of the submission deadline. However, this may vary depending on the volume of applications received, resources required and activity at the time. Applicants will be updated periodically about the status of their submission.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Due to the high volume of submissions that we expect to receive, we regret we will not always be able to give individual feedback on submissions.

In 2025 the Tourism Ireland team will be available for a number of scheduled Speed Pitching sessions. The purpose of the speed pitches is to create opportunity for producers with developed concepts to meet with the Programming Ireland Fund Team and gain topline feedback and insights on eligibility and suitability ahead of formally applying to the fund.

Applicants may wish to read the application form off-line in preparation for submission. A reference copy of the full application form (in PDF form) is available to download from www.tourismireland.com

Please note: only applications submitted through the online application form will be considered. Please contact programmingirelandfund@tourismireland.com with any enquiries.