

## Guidelines for Tourism Ireland's International Programming Ireland Fund

Application Deadline: **Friday 9 February 2024, 3pm GMT**

*Issued Friday 8 December 2023*

These guidelines are intended to assist content producers in making a submission to Tourism Ireland in response to its call-out for high-quality programming profiling the island of Ireland and its unique attractions for distribution to international audiences.

### **TOURISM IRELAND'S KEY OBJECTIVES**

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

- The island's stunning landscapes
- Rich heritage and living culture
- Food and drink
- Soft adventure
- People and characters
- Sustainable themes
- The regions beyond Dublin
- Northern Ireland
- Ireland's seasons throughout the year

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

- Well-developed projects with broad appeal, with identified broadcasters and/or a distributor.
- Submissions can apply for funding of up to a maximum of €200,000 per project (not more than 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 non-scripted 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.
- All 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. Projects with a confirmed European broadcaster are of particular interest to Tourism Ireland this year and will therefore have a distinct advantage. 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, BAI, 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.

Some examples of produced projects that met the key objectives of Tourism Ireland in previous years include *Adrian Dunbar's Coastal Ireland* produced by Afro-Mic Productions for Channel 5, *John Torode's Ireland* by Cornelia Street Productions for the Food Network, *Ireland with Michael* by Wexford House for PBS, *Voices of Ireland* by Red Shoe Productions for Sky Arts and *Golf's Greatest Holes* by No 4 Productions and Leap Productions in partnership with Boulder Creek International for Sky Sports.

### **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.

### **NEW FOR 2024**

There will be three separate scheduled funding rounds. The deadline for round one is 9 February 2024 at 3pm GMT. The dates for the following rounds will be announced in 2024.

- Experienced development executive Colin Pauser-Cowman has been appointed to oversee this year's application process. Colin is available to provide development and eligibility feedback prior to submission to companies with developed proposals intending to apply.
- If an assessed application does not meet important criteria, but demonstrates genuine potential to fulfil the scheme objectives, Tourism Ireland may provide development guidance and support to enable perceived gaps in the project to be addressed and to be re-submitted to the next round.
- Development support may include the issuing of an expression of interest from Tourism Ireland, to enhance the project's international commissioning and funding potential. Note that all funding will be subject to contract.
- There is now a much-reduced gap between funding rounds, to support potentially viable projects which may have time-sensitive broadcaster or funder interest.
- Priority is given to submissions with confirmed international broadcaster interest. However, co-production projects with Northern Ireland or Ireland broadcasters attached (anchor broadcasters) are also welcomed. In this case, applicants must clearly demonstrate a defined international distribution plan for the project, how it will be crafted/tailored to fulfil the brief of at least one international broadcaster in a desired territory.
- Three funding rounds spread across 2024 will aid projects (with attached Northern Ireland or Ireland anchor broadcasters) to apply to other identified Irish state funding schemes or tax incentives.

## 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 [HERE](#) and submit with the requirements outlined by 3.00pm on Friday 9 February 2024 and email to [ccowman@tourismireland.com](mailto:ccowman@tourismireland.com). Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Timings for funding rounds two and three will be announced in 2024.

## 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. Given the limitations on Tourism Ireland's annual budget, 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. The contribution may exclude VAT and/or entitle Tourism Ireland to a share % of net profits on a cascade basis derived from exploitation of the project.
- Payments will be made in 3 – 4 stages as the project progresses.
- 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.

- Note: 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 partner to manage the production independently.
- 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.

### **HOW WILL WE SELECT PROJECTS?**

Projects submitted will be assessed by Colin Pauser-Cowman, an independent expert and the Tourism Ireland Brand and Content Marketing Team. Selection criteria will be 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 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.

### **FEEDBACK**

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

Investment is provided to Tourism Ireland within strict annual budget limits, offers made by Tourism Ireland are subject to availability of funding and decisions by Tourism Ireland are final.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

Please contact [ccowman@tourismireland.com](mailto:ccowman@tourismireland.com) with any enquiries.

Tourism Ireland reserves the right to make changes to these guidelines.