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MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

Supports Announced by Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

by **Jennifer McGuire**

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The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) has announced a range of supports to assist the independent commercial radio sector to promote public awareness and understanding of COVID-19 and to help to sustain the sector through unprecedented economic challenges.

€2.5 Million in public awareness supports

The BAI's Sound and Vision Scheme has developed a special funding round to assist radio stations in the communication of COVID-19. Stations can apply for amounts ranging from between €45,000 to €95,000 and the deadline for applications is Wednesday 29 April 2020.

The Sound and Vision Scheme usually provides funding for programmes on Irish culture, heritage and experience, programmes to improve media literacy, and programmes to raise public awareness and understanding of global issues impacting on the State.

Access to this Sound and Vision fund is only open to all BAI licensed commercial sound broadcasting services. They must also:

- Demonstrate effective financial management, including up-to-date management accounts;
- Publish compliant annual accounts, including signed audited accounts; and
- Have a good compliance track record with the BAI.

Funding is available for costs directly related to the achievement of enhanced awareness and understanding of this emergency: including staff and salary costs for workers assigned to the delivery of projects related to COVID-19; associated administrative costs; associated utilities or running costs; relevant studio space costs and training and development costs.

The scheme will not cover capital or office equipment costs; sponsorship, fundraising or debt costs; or work on projects that has already received funding from the Government or the EU.

The application takes place over four stages: Qualification, Qualitative Assessment, Strategic Assessment and finally Authority Consideration. The maximum level of funding per applicant is €95,000, or for a joint application, the maximum of €95,000 is per station member of the joint application.

The application form and guidance note from the BAI including an application checklist is available [here](#).

Additional rounds of funding from the sound and vision fund in 2020

In addition to the funding round that is currently taking place, the BAI announced that it would be running further funding rounds from the Sound and Vision fund as well as other sources throughout 2020.

These additional rounds will target different objectives including a round focused exclusively on the

community radio sector and one focused on commercial and community television broadcasters, including public service broadcasters.

Waiving the Broadcasting Levy

As already announced by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Richard Bruton, the broadcasting levy will be waived for the first six months of 2020 for the independent radio sector. This relief is worth nearly one million euro for the sector.

The Minister has also asked the BAI to conduct an assessment of the financial impact of COVID-19 on the independent radio sector, which will be used as a basis to evaluate whether any further interventions will be necessary.

The team at LK Shields is available to provide legal advice and practical insights to any media organisation concerned with how COVID-19 might affect how they do business. For more information, please contact Jennifer McGuire at jmcguire@lkshields.ie or James Green jgreen@lkshields.ie.

To view our cross-disciplinary coverage of business continuity during the COVID-19 outbreak, please visit our dedicated [special insights page](#) and sign up to our mailing list by clicking [here](#).

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