

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND BROADCASTING

BROADCASTING IN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

There are three terrestrial broadcasters, RTÉ, TV3 and TG4 in the Republic of Ireland.

RTÉ

Radio Telefís Éireann (RTE) is a Public Service Broadcaster, a non-profit making organisation. RTÉ has been in existence for eight decades. RTÉ provides free-to-air television, radio and online services to the public; in accordance with RTÉ's statutory obligations¹.

TV3

TV3 is the Republic of Ireland's first private sector national television broadcaster and reaches approximately 88% of homes in the Republic of Ireland (total population of 3.6 million)².

TG4

TG4 is the Republic of Ireland's Irish language television channel and has been in existence from 1996. TG4 is a public service broadcaster³.

TELEVISION CHANNELS AND RADIO STATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- RTÉ operates two complementary television channels, RTE One and RTÉ Two
- Four radio stations, RTÉ Radio 1, RTÉ 2fm, RTÉ lyric fm and RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta
- RTÉ is comprised of six Integrated Business Divisions (IBDs) and a corporate centre. The six IBDs are: RTÉ News and Current Affairs, RTÉ Television, RTÉ Radio, RTÉ Publishing, RTÉ Performing Groups, RTÉ Network Limited (RTÉNL)
- TG4
- TV3

FUNDING OF BROADCASTING IN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

RTÉ

The greater proportion of RTÉ's activities are public service activities but the cost of providing these services is in excess of the amount of public funding received in the form of licence fee revenue. As a result RTÉ is reliant on a commercial funding

¹ <http://www.rte.ie/about/index2.html>

² <http://library.digiguide.com/lib/channel/TV3-302>

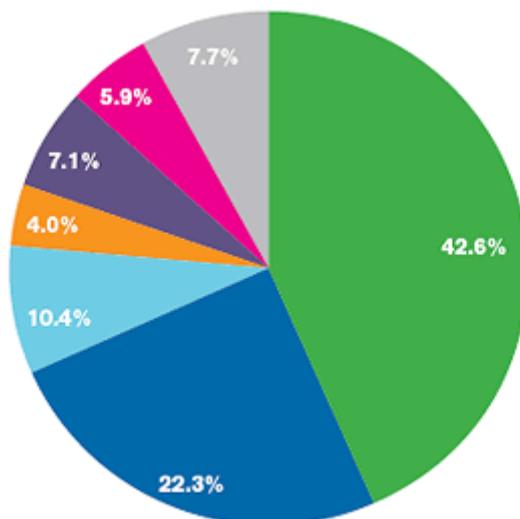
³ TG4, <http://www.tg4.ie/bearla/corp/culr.asp>

model. The TV Licence costs €160, the Black and White licence has been abolished. RTÉ 2fm and RTÉ Publishing (RTÉ Aertel, rte.ie, RTÉ Guide) did not receive any public funding⁴.

The pie-chart below shows the attribution of licence fee revenues, during 2007⁵.

Attribution of Licence Revenue received by RTÉ in 2007

RTÉ One	42.6%
RTÉ Two	22.3%
RTÉ Radio 1	10.4%
RTÉ lyric fm	4.0%
RTÉ RnaG	7.1%
Support Provided to TG4	5.9%
Performing Groups	7.7%



TG4

The Government in the Republic of Ireland will provide current funding of €35.663 million to TG4. The channel also gains revenue from selling commercial air-time and programme sponsorship⁶.

TV3

TV3 is a commercial broadcaster and so derives revenues from commercial activity such as selling air-time and sponsorship.

⁴ RTE, <http://www.rte.ie/about/licence.html>

⁵ RTE, <http://www.rte.ie/about/licence.html>

⁶ TG4, <http://www.tg4.ie/bearla/corp/culr.asp>

IRISH LANGUAGE

RTÉ

The Broadcasting Act 2001 states that;⁷

“RTÉ must provide a comprehensive range of programmes in Irish and in English that reflects the cultural diversity of the whole island of Ireland”

RTÉ provides one hour of Irish language television programming per day, at no cost, to TG4.

TG4

TG4 has some 800,000 viewers daily and as such has 3% share of the national television market. The daily Irish language programme schedule is its core service: six hours of innovative quality programming from the independent production by a wide range of material in other languages. TG4 invests over €20 million annually in original Irish programming from the independent production sector in Ireland. The Republic of Ireland Government will provide current funding of €35.663 million to TG4 for 2008⁸.

BROADCASTING REGULATOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI)

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) is an independent statutory body responsible for a number of key areas of activity with regard to television and radio services in Ireland.

Mission

The mission statement of the BCI is as follows;

“The BCI will stimulate the development of an excellent indigenous broadcast industry that meets the diverse entertainment, education and information needs of the people of Ireland, while making effective use of a national resource”⁹.

The following legislation sets out the role and function of the BCI; ¹⁰

Radio and Television Act, 1988,
Broadcasting Act, 2001, and
Broadcasting (Funding) Act, 2003

Functions of the Commission

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland is responsible for a number of key areas of activity with regard to television and radio services in Ireland, further to the provisions

⁷RTE Corporate Responsibility 2007,

<http://www.rte.ie/about/pdfs/Final%20CR%20Report%20English%2028%20August.pdf>

⁸ TG4, <http://www.tg4.ie/bearla/corp/culr.asp>

⁹ The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, <http://www.bci.ie/about/index.html>

¹⁰ The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, <http://www.bci.ie/about/index.html>

of the Radio and Television Act, 1988; the Broadcasting Act, 2001 and the Broadcasting (Funding) Act, 2003. They include¹¹;

- (1) Licensing
- (2) Monitoring
- (3) Codes and Rules
- (4) Development
- (5) Research
- (6) Information
- (7) The Broadcasting Scheme

The Broadcasting (Funding) Act, 2003 gives the Commission responsibility for the disbursement of 5% of the license fee to support new television and radio programmes¹².

ComReg

ComReg is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications sector (telecommunications, radio-communications and broadcasting transmission) and the postal sector in the Republic of Ireland¹³.

ComReg remit includes the following¹⁴:

- (1) Traditional telephone wire
- (2) Traditional television and radio
- (3) Radio Communications including fixed wireless
- (4) MMDS and deflector operators providing TV services
- (5) Mobile operators providing voice and data services
- (6) Licensing Framework for Satellite Services in Ireland
- (7) Postal delivery network

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources has a key role in developing a framework for broadcasting in the Republic of Ireland. The Broadcasting Division of the Department aims to optimise the opportunities from emerging technologies for Irish-based broadcasting services.

CURRENT ISSUES IN RELATION TO BROADCASTING

Digital television is available in Ireland (satellite and cable) figures indicate that 55% of TV households have digital TV on at least 1 TV set¹⁵.

¹¹ The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, <http://www.bci.ie/about/index.html>

¹² The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, <http://www.bci.ie/about/index.html>

¹³ ComReg, http://www.comreg.ie/about_us/roles_what_we_do.523.html

¹⁴ ComReg, http://www.comreg.ie/about_us/roles_what_we_do.523.html

Currently TV channels – RTÉ 1, RTÉ 2, TV3 and TG4 are transmitted on a free-to-air basis, over an analogue network operated by RTÉ Transmissions Network Limited (RTÉ NL). This analogue network will be replaced by a new digital television platform, Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), which will be made available in Ireland in 2008/ 2009.

DTT will be the only digital platform offering continued availability of free-to-air TV services to the population of Ireland under Irish regulation. Both satellite and cable services are subscription based.

The European Union has set the deadline of 2012 for switching off analogue terrestrial TV public service networks. 2012 is expected to see the switch off of the current analogue network used by RTE, TV3 and TG4 and their replacement by a digital terrestrial network¹⁶.

The Broadcasting Bill

The Broadcasting Bill, 2008 was approved by Government following an e-Consultation process. It is the first such legislation to undergo such a consultation process¹⁷.

The Broadcasting Bill was published on 14 May, 2008¹⁸.

The Broadcasting Bill seeks to deal with virtually all aspects of regulation and provision of broadcasting in Ireland.

The Bill represents a consolidation of almost 50 years of Irish broadcasting legislation and repeals key Acts that date from 1960.

The Bill seeks to revise the law relating to broadcasting services and content and for that purpose to establish an authority to be known as The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (Údarás Craolacháin na hÉireann).

This would dissolve The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland and The Broadcasting Complaints Commission, and amend and repeal certain enactments relating to broadcasting.

November 2008

¹⁵ ¹⁵Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources,
<http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Broadcasting/Digital+Television/>

¹⁶Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources,
<http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Broadcasting/Digital+Television/>

¹⁷ The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources,
<http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Broadcasting/Broadcasting+Bill/>

¹⁸ The Broadcasting Bill 2008, <http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/bills/2008/2908/b2908s.pdf>