

Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund

1. Background: Aims, Objectives and Priorities

General

Launched in June 2018, “Global Ireland 2025” is the Government’s strategy for doubling the scope and impact of Ireland’s global footprint in the period ahead. It represents the most ambitious renewal and expansion of Ireland’s international presence since the foundation of the State.

Aims and Objectives of Global Ireland

The stated aims and objectives of Global Ireland 2025 are to:

“... enable Ireland to be more ambitious in advancing our strategic international objectives, promoting our values and exerting our influence, both within and beyond the European Union.

... accelerate progress on diversifying and growing Ireland’s exports, inward investment and tourism, particularly in response to the challenges posed by the UK’s departure from the EU.

... strengthen Ireland’s engagement with our 70 million-strong diaspora

... bolster our efforts to bring our culture and heritage to the wider world.

.... support Ireland’s foreign policy objectives including international development, peace, disarmament and security. “

As well as committing to ambitious geographically based diplomatic, agency and programme enhancements, Global Ireland 2025 commits to promoting Ireland’s values of ‘peace, humanitarianism, equality and justice’.

In a 2019 review of the first year of the programme, the Taoiseach described Global Ireland as:

“... expression of Ireland’s ambition about what we want to accomplish on the international stage, and how we believe we can contribute in a positive way to the world we live in... It is our vision for Ireland on the world stage, promoting our culture, upholding the principles of international law, engaging in free trade, and speaking out for freedom and justice.”

Ireland’s campaign for membership of the UN Security Council was a core objective of Global Ireland that gave tangible expression to Ireland’s ambition to significantly enhance the impact and influence of the country. That objective having been achieved, it is now necessary to communicate Ireland’s enlarged role in the United Nations.

Thematic priorities of Global Ireland will change from time to time. Current priority themes are:

- Economic Recovery & Renewal Post Pandemic
- Climate Action & Sustainability
- Global Health

2. Communications and Citizen Engagement

The Global Ireland programme document states (*at p.61*) that:

“Ireland’s international reputation is a crucial aspect of our ability to exert influence and advance our international policy objectives. Our international reputation is developed and managed differently across the world, depending on a variety of local factors. In an age of increasingly fast-moving media, we need to make sure that we are resourced and able to influence developments and to tell our story, including to key influencers.”

A key objective of Global Ireland is the engagement of the citizens of Ireland in order to:

- Create an enhanced awareness of Ireland as a global citizen, thus supporting a broader sense of citizenship, co-responsibility and inter-connectedness
- Demonstrate the economic, cultural and political (including security) benefits of adequately resourced overseas programmes and activities.

In support of these objectives, the Global Ireland programme document states (*at p.62*) that we will:

“Examine opportunities to expand Ireland’s communication and digital impact around the world and awareness of it at home through partnerships or collaborations with relevant media outlets.”

3. The Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund

In fulfilment of the above commitment the Government, on 15th December 2020, approved the creation of the Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund (the ‘Fund’).

The Fund consists of €900,000 per annum for an initial pilot period of 2 years to facilitate media engagement in significant geo-political international events, and public understanding of Ireland’s changing role in the world. The overall objective of the initiative is to deepen and broaden the understanding of the Irish public of significant global issues, and Ireland’s role in the wider world, in a manner that is both accessible and engaging.

The fund will be reviewed at the end of the 2 year period, as will each of the successful applications on a case by case basis.

4. Terms of Reference

The Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund initiative is based on the principles of ‘*open Government*’. These principles include transparent, participatory, inclusive and accountable governance.

The aim of the fund is to provide better public information about major geopolitical events and issues and the changing nature of Ireland’s role in the world across a range of areas and regions. A desired outcome is that the public would, as a result of the increased media engagement, and ensuing debate, obtain an enhanced understanding of global affairs and as a secondary objective, the impact of Ireland’s foreign policy and the context in which it is pursued.

Editorial independence, within the terms of the overall partnership agreement will be preserved as a **core principle** of the Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund. Any role that DFA, or Government generally may have in relation to proposals will be made explicit.

Following the principles outlined above, applicants are invited to submit proposals for creating, broadcasting and publishing programming and content that will:

1. Seek to report on, and analyse, significant international geopolitical events and issues.
2. Enhance domestic and diaspora audience engagement with, and understanding of, wider international affairs and the broad objectives of Irish Foreign Policy, including Ireland's membership of the UN Security Council and associated engagement in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, development assistance, humanitarian activities, and climate change,
3. Seek to report on Ireland's changing role in the world and the wider objectives of Irish foreign policy.
4. Provide educational material that can be used or adapted for schools and universities.

Proposals may focus on the development of thematic or geographically based content, and/or created around individual stories or other narrative forms.

The factors to be taken into account in assessing applications will include:

- Quality of proposal
- Track record of the organisation and relevant expertise
- Reach and scope of the organisation
- Ability to deliver a wide audience as well as specific audiences
- Themes, sectors, and regions which have hitherto been lightly covered in Ireland and/or have been covered primarily by utilising news agency and/or 3rd parties
- Value for money

5. Governance

An Evaluation and Management Panel of senior DFA officials has been established to evaluate all applications and ensure transparency and accountability in decision making.

The panel will engage experienced professional advice to support the assessment of applications, make recommendations, and review delivery of agreements against agreed outputs and metrics.

Applications to the fund will remain open for a period of 24 months. Adjudication of submissions will take place on a case by case basis as applications are submitted. The results of successful applications will be published on dfa.ie as soon as practicable thereafter following final negotiation and formal agreement.

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