

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR THE PROVISION OF A
BROAD-FORMAT SOUND BROADCASTING SERVICE
ON THE FM BAND
FOR LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY

JANUARY 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 5 (1) of the *Radio and Television Act 1988*, the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (“the BCI”) hereby invites expressions of interest from parties interested in securing a sound broadcasting contract on the FM band for the provision of a **broad-format commercial sound broadcasting service for Limerick City and County**. The service is currently operated by Limerick’s Live 95 FM and this contract will expire in October 2007.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed in terms of the quality, range and type of programmes proposed and, in particular, the extent to which the service will be of relevance to listeners in Limerick City and County and in the context of the diversity of services available in the area. The BCI will also have regard to the viability of the service proposed and the extent to which the proposition represents an efficient use of spectrum.

Interested parties should present their expressions in electronic and hard copy format to the BCI. Information in respect of the proposed service should be presented in the format prescribed in Section 3 of this document: *Format for Expressions of Interest*.

Please note that an expression of interest in response to this notice **will not be** regarded as an application for a sound broadcasting contract. Parties interested in submitting expressions of interest to the BCI should do so before 5pm on **24th February 2006**. Please note that all expressions of interest will be made available publicly following consideration by the BCI.

Expressions of interest should be forwarded to the address below:

The Broadcasting Division
Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
2-5 Warrington Place
Dublin 2
Email: sowens@bci.ie

2. LICENSING OF COMMERCIAL RADIO SERVICES

2.1 Statutory and Policy Framework

The *Radio and Television Act, 1988* (“the 1988 Act”) provides the statutory framework for the licensing of independent radio services on the AM and FM bands by the BCI. The *Broadcasting Act, 2001* (“the 2001 Act”) provides the statutory framework for the licensing and regulation of additional television and radio broadcasting services on a variety of platforms and for the development of codes and rules which also apply to services licensed under the 1988 Act. Both of these statutes are available on the BCI web site www.bci.ie.

The *BCI’s Radio Licensing Policy under the 1988 Act (April 2005)* sets out the policy framework for the licensing of commercial radio services under the 1988 Act. The relevant statutory provisions, the Guiding Regulatory Principles and the Policy Objectives, which underpin the BCI’s licensing strategy, are outlined therein. This is available on the BCI web site www.bci.ie.

In reviewing the expressions of interest received, the BCI will consider the policy objectives of, diversity, viability and the efficient use of spectrum. The proposed service should complement the existing radio landscape in the franchise area, as set out below, in the context of these objectives.

2.2 The existing radio landscape in the Limerick City and County

Limerick’s Live 95FM is one of twenty-seven local/regional commercial radio stations licensed throughout the country. It is a broad-format service providing a mix of speech and music programming with a strong emphasis on news and current affairs. Limerick City and County is also served by five national radio services (four RTE public services and *Today FM*). These stations provide different services in terms of content and format and relevance to their listeners.

In September 2005, the BCI announced a three-year plan to license a range of additional commercial radio services. The first phase of this plan includes the licensing of a regional youth service for the South West of Ireland including Limerick City and County. Phase one will also see the licensing of a quasi-national speech-based service on FM and a national Christian religious service on AM. Both of these will have coverage in the Limerick City and County area.

The second phase of the plan includes a Country and Irish music service for the Mid-West region, which including Limerick City and County, and a multi-city classic gold service which will have coverage in Limerick City. More specific information on the plan and the franchise areas is available on the BCI website www.bci.ie.

In the non-commercial radio sector, there is a geographical community service in West County Limerick and a community of interest service for the student community in Limerick City. These services provide a wide range of speech and music programming addressing the interests of the communities served. The Commission's three-year licensing plan makes provision for the re-advertisement of the community of interest service in Limerick City. More specific information on this plan and the franchise areas is also available on the BCI website www.bci.ie.

The BCI is also in contract negotiations for an additional special-interest music service for the Limerick area on the AM Band.

3. SUBMISSIONS OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Please read the following guidance notes before completing the Expression of Interest Form.

1.1 Format: The expression of interest should be presented in English or Irish in the format outlined hereinafter and should include all of the information requested therein. Incomplete submissions will not be considered as valid expressions of interest. Submissions should generally not exceed six pages.

1.2 Submission: The expression of interest must be completed in typescript or in block capitals in black ink and be presented in an A4 format. All pages should be numbered. One electronic copy of the same expression of interest, in PDF format, should be submitted for publication on the BCI's website. All copies must reach the BCI's offices by **5pm on 24th February 2005**.

1.3 Public Access: Expressions of interest will be made available for public inspection at the BCI's offices once they have been considered by the BCI (www.bci.ie).

1.4 Confidential Information: The BCI may deny members of the public access to material forming part of an expression of interest where it seems appropriate that such material should be treated as confidential. Information that may be deemed to be of a confidential nature includes, *inter alia*, information that is commercially sensitive and information, the disclosure of which, would involve a breach of a confidentiality obligation which the respondent owes to a third party.

Note: Information considered by the respondent to be confidential must be presented in an annexe to the expression of interest. The annexe should be marked "confidential". The reasons for believing that the information is confidential must be set out by the respondent. Where the BCI believes material placed in a confidential annexe should be made available for inspection, it will seek to reach an agreement with the respondent regarding the extent of disclosure. If an

agreement cannot be reached, the BCI will treat the relevant information as having been withdrawn

1.5 Freedom of Information: Information may be made available further to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997. The BCI undertakes to consult about the publication of any information that was agreed to be confidential at the time of submission, before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.

FORMAT FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

1. Respondent:

- 1.1 Please provide a general description of the person/entity making the submission.
- 1.2 Please provide your contact details (name of contact person, address, telephone and email).
- 1.3 Please provide details of the background and/or relevant experience of the respondent in the context of providing the proposed service.

2. Target Audience:

- 2.1 Please define and provide a profile with reference to age brackets of the individuals and groups which will be the main focus for the proposed programming service.
- 2.2 Please provide your estimate of the projected listenership (reach) in this target audience for the proposed service.

3. Technical:

- 3.1 Please provide the Site Name, National Grid Reference (Exxxxxx Nyyyyyy), Site Height, Antenna Height, Proposed ERP and Antenna Pattern for each of the proposed transmission sites that are required to provide coverage to Limerick City and County while minimising overspill coverage to neighbouring areas.
- 3.2 Please provide a rationale for the proposed transmission plan. This should include a description of the total coverage provided, highlight areas that may receive marginal or poor coverage and explain why this proposal represents an efficient use of spectrum.
- 3.3 Please give a general indication of the number, type and location of the studios required to deliver the proposed service.

4. Programme Service:

- 4.1 Please provide a general description of the format and content of the proposed programme service.
- 4.2 Please set out your rationale for the proposed service in the context of contributing to the diversity of programming/broadcasting services by reference to:
- the target audience; and
 - the services available in the franchise area.
- 4.3 Please provide indicative details of: -
- total hours of broadcasting(per day/week);
 - number of live hours (per day/week); and
 - number of automated hours (per day/per week).
- 4.4 Please indicate your approach, including the percentage of daily broadcasting hours to be dedicated to, the following areas:
- news and current affairs programming;
 - speech programming; and
 - music programming.
- 4.5 Please provide details of any networking arrangements envisaged.

5. Operational details:

- 5.1 Please describe the general operational and economic model envisaged in respect of the proposed service (please include details of any syndicated networks envisaged).
- 5.2 Please provide indicative annual income and expenditure projections for the first three years of operation.
- 5.3 Please provide indicative details of:
- the proposed organisational structure (management and staffing); and
 - key income sources envisaged.
- 5.4 Please set out why you believe the proposed service will be viable from an economic perspective with reference to the overall operational arrangements and any other relevant issues.