



Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
Coimisiún Craolacháin na hÉireann

Media Research Funding Scheme 2009

Contact:

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The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) is seeking applications for short-term research projects under its Media Research Funding Scheme 2009.

Under this year's Scheme, two research projects will be funded for projects covering research themes provided by the BCI. Each grant will be a maximum of **€16,000**. The duration of each project will be between **3 and 9 months**.

Background information, details of the BCI and its research policy, an outline of research requirements and application procedures are detailed below.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **5pm, Friday 12th June 2009**.

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

1.1 The BCI

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) is a statutory body with responsibility for a number of key areas of activity with regard to television and radio services in Ireland further to the provisions of the *Radio and Television Act, 1988*, the *Broadcasting Act, 2001*, the *Broadcasting (Funding) Act, 2003* and the *Broadcasting (Amendment) Act, 2007*. These activities are: licensing radio and television services; assessment of compliance; monitoring the content of these services; the development of codes and rules for programming and advertising content; information; training and development initiatives for the broadcasting sector; research; and the administration of the Broadcasting Funding Scheme (Sound & Vision).

More information on the BCI can be found at www.bci.ie

1.2 Context of the Scheme

Under the *BCI Research Policy 2007*, and in line with commitments identified in the *BCI Strategic Plan 2004 – 2008*, the Commission recognises the importance of research in guiding and planning all aspects of its work.

Through the research it undertakes, the BCI aims to inform debate on broadcasting related matters, with a view to facilitating informed, evidence-based decision-making. In particular, the Commission will encourage research that provides the following:

- Promotes diversity and plurality of services and content available in broadcast media;
- Serves the needs of key audiences;
- Reflects legislative obligations and developments;
- Is consistent with the BCI's policy and workplan priorities;
- Reflects regulatory trends and developments at national, European and international levels;
- Meets the needs of identified stakeholders;
- Fulfils the Commission's statutory and policy objectives and meet the needs of the BCI's information/resource functions;
- Improves the BCI's capacity to monitor and keep abreast of developments and best practice in broadcasting and regulation, both at home and abroad;
- Reflects the levels of staffing and financial resources available to the BCI.

A copy of the *BCI Research Policy 2007* is available at www.bci.ie

SECTION 2 – SCHEME INFORMATION

2.1 Scheme Objectives

The objectives of the Media Research Funding Scheme 2009 are:

- To develop and maintain links between the BCI, third-level institutions and the broadcasting sector;
- To drive quality research initiatives to provide a strong evidence base to the regulatory environment of the BCI's work;
- To provide research that will facilitate the BCI in meeting the needs of viewers and listeners.

2.2 Scheme Funding

Applicants may apply for **one** project under the 2009 Scheme.

Projects which are already in receipt of funding, or for which the BCI would act as one of a number of funders, are ineligible for consideration under this Scheme.

Two grants will be awarded funding to the maximum value of **€16,000 each**. The grant should include **all costs** associated with the research project including V.A.T. (where relevant), outlay and all other associated costs including (but not limited to): salary; travel; course fees; subsistence; costs incurred due to reporting and/or liaising with the BCI as required; and costs associated with the production of the final report.

2.3. Research Themes

The BCI has identified the following areas of interest, in keeping with the current research agenda and in anticipation of developments in the broadcasting sector:

- Implementing the EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

Possible topics:
 - i. new rules on commercial communications;
 - ii. right to reply;
 - iii. impact of regulation on new media services (non-linear);
 - iv. the protection of minors from harmful content e.g. violence;
 - v. co-regulation and/or self-regulation in Irish broadcasting;
 - vi. media literacy – what indicators could be used in Ireland.
- The economic impact of the Sound and Vision scheme on the Irish broadcasting and/or independent production sector;
- Implementing the new Broadcasting Act;
- Digital Broadcasting in Ireland – current position and potential for development. Projects could focus on one or more areas (e.g. internet, terrestrial or satellite)

and look at this from one or more perspectives (e.g. economic, technological, etc.);

- Community broadcasting in Ireland (this could focus on a specific area e.g. funding challenges);
- Commercial broadcasting in Ireland (this could focus on a specific area e.g. the economic impact of the independent broadcasting sector in Ireland);
- Public Service Broadcasting in Ireland (this could focus on a specific area e.g. funding public service broadcasting in the digital era);
- The impact of BCI Codes and Rules on broadcasting standards in Ireland;
- Achieving pluralism - media concentration and the impact on diversity of viewpoint, outlet and source.

2.4 Eligibility Criteria

The Scheme will accept applications from the following:

- Post-doctoral and/or academic staff in third-level institutions who wish to undertake research;
- Freelance researchers;
- Individuals and/or organisations in the broadcasting/media sector who wish to undertake research;
- Individuals and/or teams from market research consultancies;
- Individuals in the broadcasting/media sector who are undertaking research as part of a continuing professional development programme.

Applicants must be Irish or EU nationals or residents. Organisations must be incorporated in Ireland or the EU.

In the case of all applicants, the BCI will require references to be provided. Please see the Application Form in Section 5 for further information.

2.5 Research Methods and Approaches

The BCI undertakes and commissions each of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research. In keeping with the *BCI Research Policy 2007*, it is anticipated that funded projects are more likely to be of an applied rather than theoretical nature. To this end, applicants are strongly advised to refer to the *BCI Research Policy 2007* to examine the legislative and regulatory contexts in which the BCI operates and in which research is undertaken.

SECTION 3 – APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Application Procedure

- Applications must be submitted using the Media Research Funding Scheme 2009 Application Form which follows in Section 5;
- Applicants must provide **5** printed copies of applications **plus** one electronic copy (Word format by e-mail);
- Applications must provide an overall fixed-price cost for the research project which should be clearly detailed and specified in the Application Form. The cost should include V.A.T., outlay and any costs associated with the work (e.g. production of documentation, travel etc.);
- Applications must be received by the Scheme deadline;

PLEASE NOTE: The BCI will not be responsible for any costs incurred in preparing an application for this Scheme.

3.2 Assessment of Applications

An Assessment Panel comprising of two members of the BCI Executive, a BCI Board Member and an independent academic with media experience will be appointed to assess applications. The Panel will assess applications received by the stated deadline which satisfy the application instructions set out above.

The BCI is not obliged to accept any incomplete application. Furthermore, if no applications of a sufficient standard are received, the BCI is not obliged to award any funding.

Applications will be assessed according to the assessment criteria which are detailed in Appendix 1.

Applications scoring less than 50% in any criteria or less than 50% of the total score will be ruled ineligible for further consideration. Applications which score at or above this point will be short-listed for further consideration by the panel. The panel may wish to call applicants to interview before a final decision is made.

SECTION 4 – CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Successful applicants will enter into a written contract in a form prescribed by the Commission, setting out the terms under which funding will be made available. Without limitation, the contract will provide for the assignment of rights, and recoupment of funding, as set out in subsections 4.1 and 4.2.

4.1 Assignment of Rights

The recipient of funding must assign to the Commission all intellectual property rights in the research deliverables (save for any rights which of their nature cannot be assigned). The Commission may license appropriate use of the deliverables by the recipient, for example, by way of academic publication. However, the Commission is unlikely to do so where such use by the recipient could prevent the Commission from obtaining the full benefit of its investment in the relevant research.

4.2 Recoupment of Funds

The Commission reserves the right to withhold further payment of funding, and/or to recoup monies already paid, if the recipient fails to discharge its obligations to the Commission.

4.3 Freedom of Information

The BCI is subject to obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), 1997. Applicants are asked to consider if any of the information supplied in response to this notice should not be disclosed because of its information content and to specify reasons for its sensitivity. The BCI will consult with applicants about sensitive information before making a decision on any request received under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), 1997, as amended. If applicants consider that none of the information supplied by them is sensitive, they should make a statement to that effect in Section 12 of the Application Form. Such information may be released in response to an FOI request.

4.4 Conflict of Interest

Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest which may arise must be fully disclosed to the BCI in Section 13 of the Application Form. Failure to disclose a relevant interest may disqualify an applicant or invalidate an award of contract.

4.5 Tax Clearance Certificate

Before funding can be awarded, the successful applicant will be required to produce a current valid Tax Clearance Certificate. If the Certificate should expire within the course of the project, a new Certificate will be required. A successful non-resident applicant will be required to produce a Statement of Suitability from the Irish Revenue Commissioners.

4.6 Project Management and Progress Updating

Regular progress updating and details of ongoing project management will be required to ensure that the objectives are achieved on time and within budget. The BCI will require quarterly updates on progress of the project and a mid-point written report. The nature of the quarterly updates can be defined and agreed between the Commission and the successful applicant during contract negotiations.

4.7 Deliverables

In addition to progress updates and a mid-point report, the successful applicant will be required to provide:

- Two (2) copies of a draft final report (plus one electronic copy), complete with all sections, references, etc. for review and feedback;
- Thirteen (13) bound copies of a final report (plus one electronic copy), written to a publishable standard, which may be used and/or published by the BCI. This report should include full references (where applicable), with original copies of referenced documentation/reports etc. appended;
- Applicants may also be required to make a presentation of their findings to the Executive and/or Board of the BCI and/or in conjunction with the BCI at a relevant public event.

Funds will be released on a phased basis to be determined as part of contract negotiations with successful applicants.

The BCI retains the right to withhold payment where the applicant has failed to meet contractual obligations in relation to the delivery of the project to an acceptable level of quality.

SECTION 5 – FORMAT FOR APPLICATIONS

Each application must include **5** printed copies of the completed application form **and** an electronic copy of material by e-mail. The Commission reserves the right to refuse applications made only by e-mail.

Please ensure that the application includes all attachments and signed declarations as requested.

BCI PROJECT GRANT APPLICATION FORM (2009)

1. ORGANISATION

2. LEAD RESEARCHER (NAME, JOB TITLE/POSITION AND CONTACT DETAILS)

Full Curriculum Vitae for the lead researcher should be appended to the application. The lead researcher will be the designated point of contact for all correspondence with the BCI.

3. PERSONNEL

Applicants are asked to provide details of all personnel involved in the work and an indication of their relevant expertise and experience.

All personnel to be involved in the proposed research are asked to provide a Curriculum Vitae including their name, title, role, organisation, role in the proposed project and relevant experience.

4. PROPOSED TITLE OF PROJECT

5. ABSTRACT (Maximum length 200 words)

This section should include, but is not limited to:

- Brief outline of research question;
- Rationale or background to the work;
- Relationship between identified research need/information gap and the Irish broadcasting landscape;

- Information relevant to broadcasting legislation and aims/objectives of the BCI.
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6. DETAILED OVERVIEW OF PROJECT (Maximum length four A4 pages)

This section should include, but is not limited to:

- Literature review;

PLEASE NOTE: A focus on policy, broadcasting practice guidelines/codes, industry standards etc. should form a primary focus for this review. Ideally, it should not have a purely academic/theoretical focus.

- Proposed approach to research/research design;
- Research methodology to be employed;
- Sampling methods (where applicable);
- Proposed data analysis methods;
- Target groups for inclusion in research (e.g. participants, industry inclusion, general public consultation/inclusion etc.);
- Approach to write up.

PLEASE NOTE: The final report should be written to a publishable standard and be accessible to the general public as well as industry audiences).

7. TIMESCALES

To ensure delivery of the work to deadlines and within budget, applicants are asked to include the following:

- a full critical-path analysis including milestone/decision-making points;
 - a clear outline of project management processes in place, including the identification of risks;
 - a proposed plan for meeting reporting and updating requirements with the BCI.
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8. PROJECT PLAN

Please include information for each stage of work using the template below.

<i>Element of work</i>	<i>Person days</i>	<i>Personnel assigned & days</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Links to other work packages</i>

9. BUDGET

Part 1: The overall fixed-price cost of the contract, to include V.A.T. where applicable, and

Part 2: A breakdown of costs for **each element** of the research, showing for each element the cost including V.A.T. and, separately, details of any other costs, taxes or duties, which may be incurred.

10. STATEMENT OF APPLICANT'S PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Applicants are asked to make a personal statement on previous experience relevant to the current proposal which will clearly demonstrate their capability to undertake the study. Reference should also be made to past publications.

11. REFEREES

Please include the following details for **each of 3 referees** (for whom similar work has previously been undertaken):

Name:

Title:

Role:

Organisation:

Telephone:

E-Mail:

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DECLARATION

I understand that information about this application not identified as sensitive may be released in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 1997. The BCI is obliged under the Act to consult with the applicant prior to any decision to release such information

Signed:

On behalf of:

13. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

If any – sign A or B

A. *There is no conflict of interest in relation to this application.*

Signed:

On behalf of:

B. *The following interest(s) is/are declared in relation to this application.*

Signed:

On behalf of:

APPENDIX 1 – CRITERIA FOR SCORING

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Score</u>
Personnel	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Qualifications and experience of research personnel – are these appropriate to the proposed project?b) Depth of skill base.c) Has a project manager sufficient skill and/or experience?d) Are adequate staffing resources and time being allocated to the project?e) Has the research team/researcher demonstrated prior experience relevant to the project?	
Proposed Research	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Has detailed background information and a rationale for the proposed project been provided?b) How relevant is the proposed research to the BCI Research Policy, BCI research agenda and/or strategic objectives?c) Does the proposal address a knowledge-gap in the Irish context?	
Methodology	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Has a clear and appropriate methodology proposal been outlined in the application?b) Is it clear that the proposed methodology will maximise knowledge output from the research?c) Have clear and appropriate analysis methods been identified and are these attainable by the proposed project team?	
Timeframe and Project Management	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Is the timeframe for the proposed research realistic (demonstrated in critical-path analysis)?b) Are quality controls and risk management processes evident?c) Has a commitment been shown to reporting/progress updating as required?d) Are sufficient supports in place to minimise risks associated with the project (e.g. administrative support, team of people where appropriate, etc.)?e) Are quality controls and risk management processes evident?	
Budget Breakdown	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Is the applicant's proposal within budget?b) Have all elements of work been costed with a clear breakdown of such costs included?c) Does the proposal demonstrate overall value for money?	
Section 10 (Personal Statement)	5
TOTAL	_/100