



Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

BAI Community Media Action Plan update

1. Background

In March 2019, the BAI published a Community Media Action Plan (“the Plan”) which had been developed following consultation with the community radio and television sectors during 2018. The Plan was developed in the context of the BAI’s Key Deliverables in the Strategy Statement 2017-2019 under Enhancing Sectoral Sustainability and Increasing Public Participation in Community Media. The plan consisted of nine actions which covered a range of activities focused on the Community Media sector.

In May 2020, the Authority approved an additional action under the plan which involved the commissioning of a review of the current policy structure for community broadcasting. This arose in the context of the new definitional framework for social benefit developed under Action One of the Plan and the challenges being experienced by the sector particularly in responding to the pandemic.

2. Action Plan Update February 2021

The table below provides an update on progress in relation to all 10 items included in the Action Plan at the end of February 2021. This is provided for information for the sector and other interested stakeholders.

Action 1 - The BAI will engage with CRAOL to develop, implement, and review a new social benefit focused evaluation methodology and will commit €30k to the project in 2019.

Status: *Completed*

Note: A short version of the overall report and methodology was launched by the BAI and Craol on National Community Radio day June 19th 2020 and this can be accessed [here](#).

Action 2 - The BAI will engage with the Community Services Programme (CSP) review with a view to ensuring that the scheme remains open and relevant for community broadcasters.

Status: *Completed*

Note: The [CSP review](#) which was undertaken by Indecon was published by the Department of Community and Rural Development in September 2020. The Indecon Report included eleven recommendations for a new CSP programme. Key amongst these was a reformed vision for the programme and the replacement of the existing strand structure with a series of sub



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programmes that would recognise the diverse value created by CSP projects. The authors proposed that the revised vision should have a dual focus as follows: “Support the development of vibrant, inclusive and empowered communities; and; Provide funding to potentially viable social enterprises”. The authors went on to propose that the sub programmes should be designed to meet three broad objectives. (a) Improve utilisation of community infrastructure to support sustainable communities. b) Provide targeted services in marginalised, socially disadvantaged communities. c) Initiate and develop potentially viable social enterprises.” This more balanced approach to value creation reflects the BAI’s recommendation in its submission and should ensure that the revised programme is more suitable for community media enterprises. Community stations struggled with the “social enterprise” focus of the current scheme and it also presented some policy difficulties for the BAI. A [High Level Action Plan](#) linked to the recommendations has also been published with an 18 month timeframe for implementation. On this basis the new scheme is expected to be launched at the end of 2021.

Action 3 - The BAI will continue to develop its strategic engagement with Pobal to ensure alignment where possible in relation to compliance requirements on community broadcasters.

Status February 2021 Ongoing

Note: The BAI welcomes the outcome of the CSP Review detailed under Action 2 above

Action 4 - The BAI’s Sectoral Learning and Development funding will particularly target initiatives that support sustainability and increase participation.

Status February 2021 Ongoing

Note: The Community Broadcasting Support Scheme is providing funding for the implementation of an evaluation based on the Social Benefit Framework in Phoenix FM in 2021. The outcomes of this will inform discussions about how the framework and methodologies can be applied more generally.

Action 5 - The BAI will develop its structural Engagement with CRAOL

Status February 2021 Ongoing

Note. The BAI held a number of workshops with CRAOL members in 2020 in relation to its activities including the dedicated Sound and Vision Round, the Community Media Policy Review and the development and launch of the Social Benefit Framework. The BAI has agreed a more structured approach to engaging with the CRAOL Committee

Action 6 - The BAI proposes not to progress with the community television sector’s proposal for core/operational funding.

Status: Completed



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Note: The Community Media Policy review has progressed discussions with the Community Television Association on strategies to secure the viability of this sector. The licence extensions listed in Action 7 were also seen as a positive response to the BAI by the challenges facing the two currently licensed stations.

Action 7 - The BAI proposes to offer DCTV and CCTV a 2-year extension to their current contracts to allow further time to develop viable operational models.

Status: Completed

Action 8 - The BAI will develop, implement and review a methodology to implement the requirement in Section 72 (6) in each service area in 2020, with a view to using this process to progress discussions about viable community TV models and informing the licencing process.

Status: Completed

Note. The Social Benefit Framework developed under Action 1 above has been endorsed by the Community Television Sector as being applicable to these operators and this provides the basis for discussions about the implementation of the Section 72 (6) requirement. Given the current COVID restrictions there is no specific timeframe for further developments here.

Action 9 - The BAI will engage with the CTA to clarify the purpose and scope of Sectoral Development funding

Status Completed

Action 10 – The BAI will commission a review of the current policy structure for community broadcasting

Status Completed

Note Nexus Research Co-operative was appointed to undertake the review and the emerging draft report “Community Media Policy and Regulation for the Future” (The Report) has been published. The Reports examines the current position of community media in Ireland and explores opportunities for the development of a more sustainable community media sector in Ireland. In addition, the Report included a draft Community Media Policy that was developed in consultation with the sector and reflected the structure of the existing BAI policy on Community Radio.

Following the submission of the Report, the BAI considered the Report and the draft policy. The BAI noted the contents of the Report and viewed it as a useful document to inform future discussions about the development of the sector. The BAI decided that the draft policy provided



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a useful base to develop a draft BAI Community Media Policy which would replace the existing Community Radio Policy which has remained largely unchanged since 1997. This document is presented at Appendix One and reflects BAI policy, practice and experience in relation to the regulation of community media services. sections were restructured to provide a greater emphasis on content and the importance of strong governance processes. The BAI is seeking views on this draft with a view to informing the final BAI Policy On Community Media which will be published late this year