

Terms of Reference of Media Literacy Ireland

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1. Purpose

Media literacy empowers people to make the most informed media choices possible about the media content and services that they consume, create and disseminate across all platforms.

In a changing media environment, media literacy fosters the knowledge and confidence to interrogate the accuracy of information, to counter unfair representation, to recognise bias and to challenge inaccurate or extremist views.

A media literate population will also appreciate the importance of diversity and inclusion in terms of creating a fairer and more representative society, with citizens better able to shape their media environment through active engagement and participation.

Media Literacy Ireland is an independent unincorporated association of members committed to the promotion of media literacy across Ireland, by sharing experiences and resources to make the sum of the whole greater than the sum of the individual parts.

Acknowledging that the pursuit of media literacy is a life-long learning journey with individuals requiring varying levels of support at particular stages of their journey, Media Literacy Ireland recognises that members will contribute to the overall aim in different ways.

2. Aims

Media Literacy Ireland will support the promotion of media literacy across Ireland by:

- Connecting people, organisations and projects to facilitate dialogue and foster the development of new partnerships and sustainable media literacy projects.
- Communicating through face-to-face events, activities and online channels to showcase best practice case-studies and projects and raise awareness of the opportunities and risks arising from new content platforms and services.
- Creating and maintaining a cross-sector media literacy knowledge base, including a media literacy research archive and database of existing projects and resources.

- Identifying gaps in provision and, where appropriate, making recommendations on how to address those gaps, including identifying and highlighting potential opportunities for funding.

3. Powers

In order to achieve its aims, and operate as an independent and sustainable network, Media Literacy Ireland will, where appropriate, have the freedom to:

- a) Elect a Steering Group, Working Groups and appoint additional support as necessary;
- b) Update the Constitution, subject to ratification by the membership;
- c) Organise events, courses, campaigns and other relevant activities;
- d) Work with other groups and exchange information (in line with data protection);
- e) Facilitate the development of cross-sector projects and resources;
- f) Gather, disseminate and publish information to foster the promotion of media literacy;
- g) Carry out consultations and research studies;
- h) Incorporate as a legal entity;
- i) Seek sources of funding to ensure adequate, independent resourcing;
- j) Be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of quorum votes to do so;
- k) Identify additional categories of membership.

4. Memberships and activities

4.1 Membership

Media Literacy Ireland is open to both individuals and organisations who are working to achieve any of the outcomes identified in the BAI's Media Literacy policy without regard to age, gender, marital status, membership of the Traveller community, family status, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, ethnicity or religion, and any other groups protected under law.

Membership is free of charge but members will be expected to share skills, knowledge, experience and resources in relation to media literacy with other members.

In order to become members, individuals or organisations should:

- Register as a member via Media Literacy Ireland's website.
- Agree to receive communications from the MLI.
- Agree to share details such as name, organisation and email with other MLI members and on the members area of the MLI website. N.B. If applicants choose not to share the above information, you will not be granted full membership to the Media Literacy Ireland website.

The network will actively seek views and membership from minority groups and those under-represented in the membership base.

Membership of any member may be terminated for good reason by the Steering Group but the member has a right to be heard by the Steering Group before a final decision is made.

4.2 Activities

Where possible, Media Literacy Ireland events will be free of charge and will usually be open to all members.

Some events may also be directed at specific groups of interest

If an event is deemed to be open only to members only, then members are not permitted to pass on their invitations without the agreement of the coordination team.

5. Management

5.1 Steering Group

The Network shall be guided by a Steering Group which will bring together the relevant skills and knowledge to set the strategic direction for the Network and provide guidance and support for network activities.

i. Membership

Membership of the Steering Group is on a purely voluntary basis. There will be 11 members of the Steering Group plus two Co-Chairs. There will also be the option of co-opting up to 4 additional members as required.

The positions of Co-Chair will be undertaken by a BAI representative and another Steering Group member. Only the non-BAI representative Co-Chair will have a casting vote.

There will also be a Vice Chair.

The BAI will remain as Co-Chair on a permanent basis and an election for the other Co-Chair, and Vice-Chair will take place every two years.

While it is anticipated that the configuration of the Steering Group will evolve over time, it is intended that the Steering Group will reflect the cross-sectoral nature of media literacy promotion such as Broadcast Media (including Community Media), Information Society, the Academic and Education sectors, Public Service Agencies, the Film sector, news publishers, Civil Society and Digital platforms.

Steering Group members are likely to bring a broad range of skills and experience and will vary in terms of seniority within individual organisations. However, where possible, Steering Group members should have a proven track record in terms of representing their sector and/or have a demonstrable interest and experience in promoting media literacy.

To ensure the effective functioning of the Steering Group and to provide continuity across the scope of Steering Group activity, there will be permanent representation from each of the following sectors:

- National Regulatory Authority
- Public Service Media
- Digital Platforms
- Civil society and / or Community organisations
- Information Society
- Academia
- Independent persons

Should any representative member of the above sectors need to step down for any reason, an alternative representative from the sector concerned may be co-opted to the Steering Group without election.

Media Literacy Ireland will actively seek to have minority groups and underrepresented sectors represented on the Steering Group.

The Steering Group may, by a two-thirds majority vote and for a good and proper reason, remove any Steering Group member, provided that person has the right to be heard before a final decision is made.

ii. Election of Chair and Members of the Steering Group

- The non-BAI Co- Chair will be elected every two years
- An election for the position of Vice-Chair will be held every two years
- After two years of service, three members of the Steering Group will be required to resign from the steering group.
- It is anticipated that three to four new members will be elected to the Steering Group every two years. . Elections will be held in line with procedures approved by the Steering Group.

iii. Meetings

The Steering Group will meet at least three times each year. The Steering Group retains the discretion to hold additional meetings if warranted. Steering Group members may receive updates via email/phone/video call on an ad-hoc basis if required.

The quorum for Steering Group meetings shall be half of the Steering Group members plus the Chairperson.

Voting at Steering Group meetings shall be by a show of hands and or a verbal yes / no. If there is a tied vote then the Chairperson shall have a second vote.

Key actions agreed by the Steering Group at each meeting will be drawn up and circulated to members of Steering Group.

iv. Role of Steering Group

The Steering Group will:-

- Agree an annual work plan.
- Agree objectives for Working Groups.
- Agree an evaluation framework.
- Agree communications strategy.
- Agree the election process for the Steering Group.

5.2 Coordination

The Steering Group and the Working Groups will be supported by a small Coordination Team consisting of BAI personnel, an independent Network Coordinator and any third party that is deemed appropriate by Media Literacy Ireland.

5.3 Working Groups

Media Literacy Ireland projects will be supported by a number of Working Groups, as agreed by the Steering Group. These Working Groups will consist of a small number of people with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to contribute, on a voluntary basis, to a specific, short-term project for the Network.

The specific skills and experience required on a Working Group, and the estimated time commitment, will vary depending on the subject matter and scope. Similarly, the scope and objectives of each Working Group will be developed by the Working Group in conjunction with the Coordination team and in response to the MLI objectives agreed by the Steering Group.

Network members will be asked to indicate on their membership form whether they are interested in participating on Working Groups. If they are, their names will be added to the Working Group Panel along with a summary of their specific skills and experience in relation to media literacy. This information will be used by the coordination team to identify the most appropriate members for specific Working Groups.

5.4 Evaluation

An evaluation framework will be agreed by Steering Group, in consultation with the wider Network, the Working groups and the coordination team. The framework will evaluate:-

- 1) the outcomes, outputs and functioning of the wider Media Literacy Ireland network
- 2) the outputs and functioning of the Steering Group
- 3) the outputs and functioning of the Working Groups
- 4) any other aspect of the operation of the network as required and arising from time to time.

6. Expenses

It is expected that members will cover their own expenses related to their MLI activities. However, in exceptional circumstances the BAI, as key facilitator of the association may cover appropriate expenses associated with participation in the Steering Group and any Working Groups established. All expenses presented must be accompanied by supporting documentation. Media Literacy Ireland members, including the Steering Group or any Working Group established will not receive payment for their participation.

In general, expenses will not be covered for members attending Media Literacy Ireland events, however individuals or groups who are not in a position to cover their own expenses and are at risk of exclusion may apply for support to the BAI in its capacity as a key facilitator of the association, in line with an established criteria.

7. Conflicts of Interest

Members of the Steering Group or any Working Group established will be required to disclose to the Chairperson and/or members of the coordination team any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest prior to, or during, Steering Group/Working Group meetings.

8. Accessibility

Media Literacy Ireland is committed to making its activities and communications accessible to all. As such MLI will, where possible, use 'plain English' and Universal Design Guidelines for all public-facing communications.

In addition MLI will aim to:-

- select accessible venues for meetings and / or events
- facilitate sign language and speech text services where possible
- provide information via websites and email in line with accessibility guidelines where possible

9. Freedom of Information and Data Protection

Information held by Media Literacy Ireland is subject to its obligations under law, including under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) effective from May 2018.