

The RTÉ logo is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The background of the entire page is a dark blue gradient with a faint, glowing map of Ireland overlaid with a network of light blue lines and dots, suggesting a digital or technological theme.

RTÉ

TwentyTwentyFour

Revised Strategy

Welcome.

The challenges facing us are a serious threat to the future of public broadcasting, at a time when public service media has never been more important.

But RTÉ does have a plan, which we are confident can address many of the challenges we face and bring Ireland's national public media to stability.

This is RTÉ's revised strategy, 2020-2024.

DEE FORBES

Director-General, RTÉ

Key Things to Know.

- **94%** of Irish citizens use one or more RTÉ services on a weekly basis
- RTÉ remains one of the most trusted organisations in the country - **81%** of people consider RTÉ to be an important part of Irish life
- The TV Licence, which sustains public service media, is the equivalent to **44 cents** per day per household.





Who we are.

RTÉ is one of the longest serving public service broadcasters in Europe. A not-for-profit organisation, RTÉ exists to meet the needs of Irish citizens, and not private shareholders. RTÉ's vision is to champion Irish culture by captivating audiences with trusted, engaging and challenging content; celebrating our country's rich diversity; and cultivating Ireland's talent.

RTÉ operates the most-popular television, radio and online services in the country; it endeavours to meet the needs of audiences of all ages; and with a diverse range of programming; news and current affairs, music, drama, arts, children's programming, documentary, live performance, live sport and Irish-language programmes.

How RTÉ is Funded.

Similar to other public service organisations across Europe, RTÉ is funded through two streams of income; public funding (the TV Licence) and commercial income (which we must generate to sustain all services). This model minimises the contribution of individual householders, and enables Irish audiences to benefit from a high quality public media service comparable to many of the best in Europe.

Over the past decade, much of the commercial income that previously sustained public service media has migrated to global media companies such as Google and Facebook. As a public service broadcaster, on both TV and radio, RTÉ is restricted by regulation to half the advertising minutage of its commercial competitors.

Over the past decade, the TV Licence system, which underpins public service broadcasting, has become increasingly inefficient, and no longer reflects how people consume media today.

As a result, RTÉ's income is no longer sufficient to deliver against its remit, or fulfil its national role in the way that was originally intended.

RTÉ enriches Irish life.

- Over **2,000,000** people listen to RTÉ's radio services every week.
- RTÉ provides Ireland's **most-trusted**, and most comprehensive news and current affairs coverage; ranging from nationwide correspondents, extensive coverage of European, UK and US news, and specialist reporting.
- We provide unparalleled coverage of national sport **free-to-air**, helping to drive national sports participation and help celebrate this aspect of Irish culture.
- RTÉ provides the **greatest range of arts coverage** and arts programming; from folk to classical music, plays, poetry, topical arts coverage, and literature, along with its promotion of national arts events through the RTÉ Supporting the Arts scheme.
- RTÉ is the **biggest commissioner of programming** from Ireland's independent creative sector; showcasing the breadth of talent and creativity among Ireland's finest programme makers.
- RTÉ provides **Ireland's only dedicated children's media services**; in a completely ad-free environment
- RTÉ delivers **the news in Irish** – on all linear channels. RTÉ delivers a comprehensive Irish-language news service across all RTÉ's channels and online services, and for TG4.
- According to **Reuters**, RTÉ News online was the main online brand used for news in 2019.
- RTÉ helps treasure the past and protect the present; **RTÉ Archives** preserves Ireland's largest audio visual archive and records.
- We connect with young people and support Irish artists. **RTÉ 2fm** is the largest station in Ireland for 15-34 year olds, and the biggest promoter of breakthrough talent.
- RTÉ brings people unique experiences. The RTÉ orchestras and choirs performed 207 times in 2018 – **56% more people went to see them in 2018**, almost 220,000 people.
- And we're **guaranteed Irish**. RTÉ spends over 80% of total operating costs with Irish personnel and Irish suppliers.

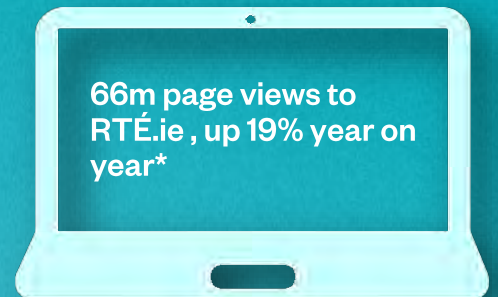
RTÉ is changing.

And we will continue to change. Since 2008 we have reduced our overall annual operating costs by 23%. Throughout this period, RTÉ has focused on audience needs, delivering the most-watched and most-listened-to-programmes in the country.

Over the past three years, RTÉ has restructured so that we are best enabled to make great content for all audiences in the most efficient way possible.

RTÉ has invested substantially in digital transformation, including mobile apps and a new and improved RTÉ Player, which offers both on-demand and live streaming.

With the proceeds from the recent land sale, RTÉ has invested in essential upgrades of network and broadcast infrastructure, including high-definition ready studios.



66m page views to
RTÉ.ie, up 19% year on
year*



Peak time share
of viewing is 34%*



RTÉ News online had
107,000,000 page
views last month*

*Period covered is 26th August – 13th October 2019

The future of RTÉ, and public service media, is a new blend of complementary live and on-demand services, offering audiences compelling and varied programming and content, at times and on devices that suit them.



The TV Licence system bears less and less relation to how audiences are really consuming programming and content; unless this is addressed by Government, RTÉ's future is in real jeopardy.

What should RTÉ stand for today, and into the future?

- RTÉ must help us make sense of the world. We need journalism and a national news and current affairs service that we can trust, that is fair, fearless, and seeks to explain as much as to challenge. This is central to any functioning democracy.
- RTÉ must help us understand who we are and what makes us, us. To do so we must support Irish culture and Irish talent in all its forms, be that in music, drama, comedy, arts, sports, or the Irish language.
- RTÉ must be close to its audience. We must be curious about and seek to tell the ever-changing story of the lives, interests and concerns of all the people living all over this Island – North and South, East and West.
- RTÉ must help bring people together to allow us share in moments of challenge and moments of celebration.



RTÉ must be ambitious.

We must constantly push ourselves to give the people of Ireland exactly what they deserve - bigger, better and more creative ideas.

What will RTÉ look like by 2024?

- RTÉ's streaming and on-demand services will be even more central for our audience, taking their place alongside our linear channels – this will require significant new investment.
- RTÉ will have increased its investment in high quality Irish drama and scripted comedy.
- RTÉ One will be stronger and more distinctive than it is today — the biggest media channel in the country — it will be the place where the nation comes together for high quality, Irish, live and appointment to view programming that acts as an antidote to the streamers.
- RTÉ's television services and RTÉ Player will be strategically aligned, each supporting the other – offering compelling linear and on-demand viewing opportunities to fit with audience needs and changing habits.
- RTÉ Radio 1 will continue to be our key social network - a constant daily touch-point with our audiences, sparking and hosting rich conversations.
- RTÉ will have developed a new business producing up to 50 live ticketed events a year, in multiple genres (music, sport, lifestyle, culture and politics), connecting with a variety of audiences across the country.
- RTÉ will be the country's biggest podcast producer and commissioner, complementing our broadcast radio services with on demand audio programming for every taste and interest.
- RTÉ will have enhanced the audiences user experience of many of our digital services through mandatory sign-in and personalisation.
- All of RTÉ's programming and content teams will be together in a new integrated media centre in Donnybrook creating Ireland's biggest content hub housing all our television, on-line and radio output.



And RTÉ will be financially stable, with diversified and growing commercial income, secure public funding and an operating cost base less than our total revenues.

20

24

Strategy

Specifics.



Evolve

- We will move RTÉ's biggest sporting moments to RTÉ One
- We will increase investment in live TV moments and big events (e.g. RTÉ on Climate, Late Late Show Specials)
- We will launch a kids on-demand and digital strategy
- We will evolve the user experience of many of our digital services through mandatory sign-in and personalisation



Enhance

- We will enhance our content offering on RTÉ Player, with longer windows, improving and investing in the technology, features and functionality
- We will develop our live and on-demand RTÉ Player product, building towards a more integrated service offering video and audio
- We will create new visualised radio studios
- We will deliver podcasts for a wide variety of tastes and interests
- We will offer new RTÉ experiences and events – music, sport, lifestyle, culture, politics
- We will increase the hours of high-quality Irish drama

Strategy

Specifics.



Modify

- The *RTÉ Guide* is for sale
- RTÉ will close its current studio in Limerick in 2020; production of RTÉ lyric fm will move to Cork and Dublin
- RTÉ will continue to provide a mid-west news service in Limerick
- We will close the Digital Audio Broadcast network, as well as RTÉ's digital radio stations (RTÉ 2XM, RTÉ Pulse, RTÉ Gold, RTÉjr Radio & RTÉ Radio 1 Extra)
- RTÉ Aertel will cease
- The RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra will transfer to the National Concert Hall
- We will develop a new integrated media centre in Donnybrook, investing in new digital infrastructure



Reduce

- We need to reduce projected costs by €60 million over three years (2020-2023), in addition to the reduction of 23% delivered between 2008 and 2018
- We need to reduce the fees paid to our top contracted on-air presenters by 15%, in addition to the 30+% cuts as agreed in previous years
- We need to reduce staff costs—we will consult with staff and unions on a number of initiatives, to include pay freeze, tiered pay reductions, review of benefits, and work practice reforms
- The Executive Board will take a 10% reduction in pay; the Board of RTÉ will waive its fees
- We need to achieve a staff headcount reduction of c. 200 in 2020

The TV Licence is Broken.

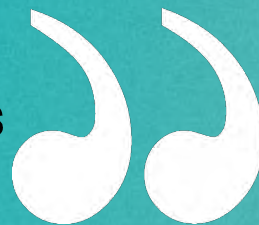
Ireland's TV Licence system is irrevocably broken and is no longer capable of properly supporting public service broadcasting: or Ireland's broader audio-visual and creative sectors.

- Ireland has one of the highest evasion rates in Europe. At c. 13%, it results in the loss of c. **€25 million** in public funding every year.
- By virtue of completely outdated legislation, 11% (and growing) of households do not pay the TV Licence but can still consume RTÉ programming on RTÉ Player. This means a *further* loss of c. **€20 million** in public funding annually.
- Unlike other public utilities, the level of the TV Licence has not been adjusted to inflation in over a decade. The price of every public utility in Ireland has risen over the past decade (postage stamps, hospital fees, electricity, gas, bus fares, etc).
- Ireland has one of the highest TV Licence collection costs in Europe, with collection costs of approximately 6%, or €12 million every year.

This is resulting in lost jobs and lost opportunity – not just in RTÉ but right across the sector.

Hundreds of hours of original Irish programming and Irish stories are lost to audiences in Ireland every year.

Overall, almost €50 million is lost to public service media each year.



This Funding is Critical.

And it's not just RTÉ saying so.



It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Public Service Broadcasting in Ireland faces wide ranging and significant challenges and that urgent action is now required. (BAI, 2018)

Countless independent reviews have recommended that public funding to RTÉ be increased, alongside comprehensive reform of the TV Licence system, including the review of the funding of public service broadcasting conducted by the Joint Oireachtas Committee in 2017.

RTÉ submitted its 5-Year Strategy 2018 – 2022 to the BAI for review in October 2017.

The Five-year Review examined the strategic challenges facing RTÉ and TG4 and the related funding required to support their work in serving Irish audiences in the evolving digital environment. BAI submitted review to Government in Spring 2018.

The BAI recommends, at a minimum, that RTÉ should receive an increase in its annual public funding of €30m". (October 2018)

Government's initial response – to tender the licence fee collection but defer real reforms for 5-6 years - will not address the crisis in public service media funding. Disruptive change in media is happening at a far faster rate.

This is Fixable.

RTÉ is operating at a significant deficit, largely due to the inaction on–licence fee reform.

Several major European markets have recently reformed or altered their licence fee collection arrangements, including Germany and Switzerland. In addition:



In Italy, collection transferred to electricity suppliers. The fee was reduced by 20% and evasion fell hugely.



In Denmark, the licence fee will be phased out by 2022 to become a public service tax via state budget.



In Norway, the licence fee will be phased out in 2020 to become a public service tax.



In the UK, the fee extends to the BBC iPlayer and is linked to inflation.

Urgent Action is Required.

The decision to delay a meaningful reform of the TV Licence system for a further five to six years will, if unchanged, have a catastrophic impact on the future of public service media, the future of the Irish independent production, and the broader cultural and creative sectors.

RTÉ has begun an ambitious and far-reaching process of change. We need others to come with us on this journey too - and the role of Government is central.

If government does not fix the broken TV Licence system, RTÉ will not return to a stable financial position and the transformation plan will not succeed; RTÉ will also not be able to reinvent itself for future generations, nor will it be able to fulfill its remit or sustain much of what it does today.

Many other countries have fixed this exact problem – so can Ireland.

The time is now.

