



## FAQs Standard Grant Session

### **Background Information**

Connect-World has recently assumed responsibility for administering the Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund from Irish Aid, which is funded by Irish Aid.

This fits in with Connect-World work of promoting the quantity and quality of media coverage of development issues. The Connect-World website [www.connect-world.net](http://www.connect-world.net), while not a news site, is a useful resource for background information and context of development issues.

### **Simon Cumbers**

Last year the fund was renamed the Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund in memory of Simon Cumbers who died after being shot in Riyadh in 2004. The Cumbers family are pleased to be involved in this living memorial to him.

### **History of Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund**

The Fund was set up three years ago with the aim of supporting journalists in the coverage of development issues, which can be difficult and expensive for the media to cover. It is increasingly important to promote greater awareness of development issues among Irish people as the €15 million that will be spent on International development next year is a huge commitment of taxpayers' money. Irish Aid has just published its' first White Paper on International Development and by 2012 expenditure is expected to reach €1.5 billion.

Initially, local radio stations were the main focus but different forms of media have been added. This year for the first time a specific grant has been made available for TV also.

In the past there tended to be 60-70 applications per year, of which around 40 tended to be funded. Some examples are:

Joe Humphries' article in the Irish Times about corruption in Tanzania;  
an article comparing the impact of World Trade Organisation regulation changes in Ireland and Mozambique;  
a programme on Newstalk about the impact on Angolan society of its' qualification in the World Cup.

## **Formats of Submissions**

The application forms are deliberately non-prescriptive to encourage participants to be creative in telling development stories – through animation, drama for instance.

Some of the best projects involve a variety of media, for instance a newspaper feature over two days interspersed with a radio discussion, or photos in a magazine linked to a photo essay online.

A way of making development stories have relevance to Irish people could be to highlight similar challenges faced, for instance, in the sugar industry or as a result of globalisation. Projects won't be funded that are campaigning in nature or that advertise the agenda of any one government agency or NGO. Although they may be consulted and provide background support/information the project should concentrate on telling the story of the development theme, not what any one agency is doing about it.

## **Q's on Themes/Issues**

**Q. There is a strong focus on Africa, will other parts of the developing world be considered?**

**A.** Yes, Irish Aid concentrates on Africa as that is where there is the slowest rate of development and the greatest poverty in the world. Asia has poverty but the rates of progress there are better.

**Q. Aside from Africa, where will next year's €815 million be spent?**

**A.** Irish Aid is involved, either directly or indirectly by funding development agencies, in 90 countries. (The Connect-World website lists where development agencies and Irish Aid are active.)

**Q. Would it be permissible to use the facilities/infrastructure of NGOs on the ground?**

**A.** No problem, as long as the project isn't steered into presenting the point of view of that NGO.

**Q. How about Agencies funded by Irish Aid, would that count as promoting Irish Aid?**

**A.** It is not a problem to use a project as a gateway to exploring the themes/issues and talking to people on the ground, as long as it doesn't present just the view of Irish Aid.

**Q. Why is the local-global link necessary to justify development coverage if the issue of development is so important in its' own right?**

**A.** It is not intended to be prescriptive in saying that there has to be an Irish voice or that this is necessary in order to justify the importance of international

development issues. Rather, an Irish connection, where possible, would aid the resonance/relevance to Irish people.

### **Qs on Funding/Application**

#### **Q. Who decides on the success of applications? How is it decided?**

**A.** This is a competitive grant scheme. A panel of judges will be set up consisting of Irish Aid, Connect-World, possibly the Cumbers family, and a relevant industry expert.

#### **Q. With Irish Aid's emphasis on Africa, how would a project on Eastern Europe and the effects of globalisation fare?**

**A.** Irish Aid does work in Eastern Europe through development organisations. Eastern Europe has the highest rate of HIV infection in the world which is a big issue. Although there are sound reasons for the Irish Aid focus on Africa, that doesn't preclude a project on Eastern Europe.

#### **Q. Would an application from an organisation already funded by Irish Aid be disadvantaged?**

**A.** The rules of application have been changed this year to preclude NGOs applying for the fund on their own, although they can apply as a partner with a broadcaster. Otherwise, the fact that NGO is funded by Irish Aid is not an issue.

#### **Q. Would longer pieces of writing (20,000-40,000) words be funded? For how much?**

**A.** Yes, if the proposal was good. This hasn't been done before but entrants are encouraged to be creative. Funding would be granted for reasonable costs.

#### **Q. Some agencies has been approached by many journalists interested in collaborating. Will this pro-active approach by journalists be recognised in the judging process?**

**A.** Irish Aid gives €100 Million yearly to Irish NGOs, so this year the focus of the Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund has shifted to assisting journalists, who should be the lead person in the application.

#### **Q. Is there a policy on how much funding has been received from other sources? Is this funding seed/stand-alone/development or matching funding?**

**A.** There is no policy on funding from other sources. Applicants are asked for a record of other funders for the purpose of records and to see who forms part of the project team and what their role is.

#### **Q. What if there is no access to a widespread distribution mechanism or a dependence on having to get co-operation from editors?**

**A.** It is not for the Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund to make editorial decisions on what should be news. As for distribution it is preferable to fund projects that have a realistic chance of being published.

**Q. Is there a limit on the proportion of the project that will be funded, e.g. 80%?**

**A.** No. The Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund is happy to fund 100% of the project. The judging panel will have a good idea how much costs associated with the project would normally be so it would be known what a reasonable request for funding looks like.

**Q. Is there a limit on how much the grant is?**

**A.** Not as such, it depends on what the legitimate costs of the project would be.

**Q. What is the judging timescale?**

**A.** For the standard grant the deadline is mid-January and entrants will be informed of decisions by mid-February. The successful projects will need to be published/broadcast by the end of the calendar year.

**Q. Would a book be published if there was publisher interested?**

**A.** Only if it was likely to be a best-seller and was not retrospective work.

**Q. What about an issue that doesn't have a direct local link – would that be funded?**

**A.** Yes, if it met other criteria and was a good proposal.

**Q. Will previous experience in this area be an advantage?**

**A.** The judging panel will look at applicants' previous work to get a feel for how the project will be delivered, but lack of experience doesn't preclude applying. Experience in development issues as such is not necessary but experience in project delivery would be, although newcomers are encouraged.

There have been cases where projects haven't come to fruition even though the money has been given where this has not been the fault of the journalists – rather often the result of changing circumstances.

**Q. What if a broadcaster wants control of the rights?**

**A.** There is no issue with that, as long as Connect-World and Irish Aid can use the projects. Connect-World plans to eventually develop the website to enable all the projects to be displayed there.

