



FAQ TV Seed Grant Session

Background to the Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund

The background is similar to that outlined during the Standard Grant Session (see FAQ Standard Grant Session Document).

This year, however, an amount (€80,000) has been allocated specifically as seed money for TV projects.

This is the first year there has been a TV Seed Grant so it is a learning experience for Connect-World and Irish Aid. The aim is to encourage the brightest and best TV producers and directors to engage in the theme of international development. This fund recognises that the costs of this are high – for instance, 2-3 people travelling to Sierra Leone for a fortnight costs in the region of €15,000. The seed fund is for proposals that will eventually go on to be projects funded from another source.

Format

The application form is deliberately non-prescriptive. The themes should deal with international development and the format is open – drama, animation, reality show. The main aim is to bring a new audience to the area of international development so be creative.

There is more risk that the project won't come to fruition in this scheme as there won't be a broadcast agreement at the time of application, so the applicants' track record will carry a bit more weight in the evaluation of projects for the TV Seed Grant than for the Standard Grant.

Themes

Q. Is this fund also primarily concerned with Africa or would a project dealing with, for instance, India fulfil criteria? A. Again, the focus is mainly on Africa but projects dealing with other regions/countries are accepted.

Q. What about the chances of low-budget formats compared with formats with

more high-end production values?

A. The final output/production quality is open as long as the content is strong.

Applications are not restricted to Irish broadcasters although a broadcaster that broadcasts in this jurisdiction would be preferable.

Q. If a project focused on corruption, for instance, in a country that is supported by Irish Aid would this be a disadvantage?

A. A polemic against Irish Aid that would not be viewed favourably, but these programmes should be provocative. The administration has been moved to Connect-World so that gives some distance from Irish Aid.

Q. Is a broadcast agreement necessary?

A. No, the expert on the panel will have a good idea what is likely to appeal to broadcasters. Applicants should note on the application what they hope the final output/broadcast reach will be.

Q. What about producing DVDs or videos for use of NGOs or educators or to be shown at festivals?

A. The project should be intended for broadcast although it could be subsequently packaged as a DVD.

Q. What about programmes which deal with the campaigns/activities of a partner NGO?

A. As an example, the issue of fair trade affects all, but a programme that advertises Oxfam's fair trade campaign wouldn't be suitable. Programme-makers should differentiate between the issue and who advocates in that area.

Q. What if the programme is exploring what an organisation is doing to deal with a particular issue?

A. The Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund are not interested in what an organisation is doing. Their point of view/activities may be included but the main focus should be on the issue.

Q. The budget is potentially €80,000 – should applications be pitched at that level?

A. The project should be pitched at a reasonable budget to get the work done.

Q. How about co-productions with other broadcasters?

A. There is no problem with that.

Q. What is a producer wanted to use a local company/personnel on the

ground, for instance in Sierra Leone?

A. No problem, as long as the quality of the local company/personnel is good and the lead applicant has a tax cert and is based in Ireland.

Q. Is it necessary to be connected to an aid agency?

A. Not necessarily, and applicants are asked about aid agency connections to get an idea of who is on the team.

Q. Is it recognised that freelancers are at a disadvantage in terms of administrative and technical back-up?

A. Yes, it is taken into account that a pitch from, say a journalist from RTE will incur less costs than a bid from a freelancer.

Some projects have been funded but on the condition that the funding would be for less than the applicant requested.

Q. How many grant rounds are there per year?

A. There will be two Standard Grant rounds. As the TV Seed Grant is a pilot, there will only be one round this year but this may change next year.

Q. If a project was originally a TV one but later crossed over into the online world as well would additional funding be made available?

A. If other outlets for the TV project became available we would look at that. If the project has any elements of TV at all the application should be made to the TV Seed Grant, not the Standard Grant.

Q. How important is the local-global link?

A. It is not so much that an Irish voice has to be present in the project, rather that the issue is captured in such a way as to have resonance/relevance in Ireland. One way to do this would be if there was a local link.

Q. Will there be a feedback mechanism for unsuccessful applications to aid in the submission of future applications?

A. Yes, that happened in previous years also. It's important for Connect-World and Irish Aid too.

Q. Are there similarities between this fund and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland's (BCI) Sound & Vision?

A. There are a lot of similarities with Sound & Vision, but the main differences are that Sound & Vision requires a broadcaster already on board and the programme

must be broadcast at peak times unless the audience is children or an educational programme. Also, for Sound & Vision the programme cannot be primarily news or current affairs, but it was felt that international development isn't just about current affairs.

The Simon Cumbers Media Challenge Fund TV Seed Grant is aimed at the pre-production stage, whereas Sound & Vision would apply at a later stage of development.