

Community Television in Ireland

Main Report
July 2023



Coimisiún
na Meán

NEXUS

Community Television in Ireland

Main Report

July 1st 2023

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Nexus Research Cooperative

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Acronyms

BAI:	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
CBO:	Community Based Organisation
CBSS:	Community Broadcasting Support Scheme (of the BAI)
CCTV:	Cork Community Television
CESCA:	Cork Equality and Sustainable Community Alliance
CnaM:	Coimisiún na Meán
CRAOL:	Community Radio Forum of Ireland
CTA:	Community Television Association
CTV:	Community Television
CSP:	Community Services Programme
DCTV:	Dublin Community Television
DRCD:	Department of Rural and Community Development
DTCSGSM:	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
EPG:	electronic programme guide
FoMC:	Future of Media Commission
MoU:	Memorandum of Understanding
NVTV:	Northern Visions Television
OSMR:	Online Safety and Media Regulation Act
P5TV:	Province 5 Television
SLD:	Sectoral Learning and Development (of the BAI)
VOD:	Video on Demand

Executive Summary

Community television (CTV)¹ emerged in Ireland as part of a worldwide movement of community empowerment and activism, inspired by the right to communicate. Following a decade of lobbying and mobilisation, three channels secured a licence to broadcast, including a ‘must-carry’ obligation on the cable operator. Two of these, DCTV (awarded in 2006) in Dublin and CCTv (in 2009) in Cork, are still going today.

These CTV service providers regard themselves, first and foremost, as contributing to community empowerment and agency in media, and this underpins an extraordinary level of commitment from volunteers who have kept the sector going since its foundation. CTV is thus a sub-sector of community development; and simultaneously a sub-sector of media, but as the latter it is mainly *instrumental*, a means to achieve a broader goal.

Findings

In pursuance of Section 72 of the 2009 Broadcasting Act, a number of findings are presented:

1. CTV, with its background in community development, offers multiple opportunities for its members and target groups to participate, at many levels, from programme scheduling, to management, to training and media production.
2. Although no figures are available, target-group viewership on cable is probably very modest, inhibited by low visibility on Virgin’s EPG and a lack of funds for promotion. However, live-streaming is available on CCTv² and VOD is well advanced; and some DCTV content has been widely viewed on commercial platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, and community producers such as NearTV³ and Ballymun Communications⁴ have developed their own platforms. Most content is launched in its target communities, with open discussions and multiple viewings.
3. The CTV sector produces a significant amount of high quality output, much, though not all, funded through Sound and Vision, and a very large volume of more innovative, experimental content by CTV station members and in numerous collaborations with a very diverse range of community organisations. A strong emphasis is usually on the process of production, and the benefits to communities of gaining skills, media literacy, and building identity. Overall, the sector has created a huge volume of content, most of it with a unique community focus.

Two distinct models of CTV service providers have emerged.

DCTV, between 2008 and 2013, pioneered a multi-functional service provider model. Operating from a user-friendly city centre studio, it offered media training to hundreds of people, virtually on request, and worked with numerous community organisations, statutory agencies and individuals to produce a large volume of content, often highly innovative if varying in production values. It relied heavily on grants from the Sound and Vision Scheme, designed solely to support individual productions. DCTV also supported and facilitated many community producers to secure funds and by broadcasting their work. The model, however, was financially unsustainable and from 2014 on, DCTV

¹ Most acronyms are not spelled out in the executive summary; refer to the acronym list above.

² <https://corkcommunitytv.ie/>

³ <http://neartv.ie/>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6AxEidA2HbHqiD7Ww5XGPw>

was forced to pare back activities to cable broadcasting, intermittently of poor quality, and facilitating, as much as they could, community producers to secure resources.

The other model, developed by CCTV, recognised early on that achieving a high volume of output and offering direct production facilities were not for the moment feasible, and instead focused on delivering quality dissemination, and building relationships with community producers and relevant statutory agencies. Working hand-in-hand with community producer Frameworks Films, it has enabled and collaborated in a wide variety of high-quality productions, from local governance and events, to community profiles, to media literacy and community training actions. It delivers a reliable signal to the cable operator and more recently offers live-streaming and a pilot VOD service. Yet this model too is also likely, in the long-term, not to be sustainable. It relies for its core activities on volunteers, some highly-skilled, willing to commit time, energy and resources to keeping it going, and it is a constant struggle to secure funding for basic expenses.

The evidence is that both models have succeeded in bringing significant benefits to their members and target communities, benefits that can now be identified and documented through the Social Benefit Framework. Crucially, neither model has had the resources to nurture and sustain, over extended periods, the relationships they built with community-based organisation and statutory bodies, that are critical to building a sustainable and vibrant sector.

A key conclusion is that media sector supports over the years, and in particular the Sound and Vision Scheme, were not tailored to the characteristics or needs of the sector, despite a legislative basis to do so. It was treated like other media sub-sectors, its roots in community empowerment disregarded, and the scheme failed to encourage the behavioural dynamic needed to build the sector collectively. Recent changes with the Social Benefit Rounds represent an improvement. The Community Broadcasting Support Scheme is also much too limited in scope and in funding to address the main challenges, and anyhow designed only to enable occasional research and reviews. CTV still lacks a contribution to core funding, to underpin and leverage the work of its member volunteers and various other sources of funding and support. Financial support for its contribution to community development, for instance through community development and enterprises programmes, is also not forthcoming, despite the contribution to social benefit the sector has made.

This report concludes that the CTV sector, combining both licensed CTV service providers and the community producers they facilitate and collaborate with, have the proven potential to make a much more significant contribution to both community development and media diversity in Ireland. The resources required to do so are modest and, in the context of the ongoing changes and new schemes emerging to support the media sector, readily achievable with the appropriate approaches and an informed and coordinated response from stakeholders.

In that light, this report makes a number of recommendations to all stakeholders.

Recommendations

For Legislators

1. *Tailor existing supports for CTV:* Legislative change may be needed to ensure the Media Fund can (i) contribute to core costs of CTV (ii) fund a category of community news and current affairs.
2. *Platform Access and Prominence:* Upcoming legislation can ensure that CTV service providers secure EPG prominence on platform providers, alongside other public service content providers.

3. *Technical support from Cable Operators:* A minor legislative change is needed to oblige cable operators to provide technical support for its feed into their broadcast systems.

For Government Departments and Coimisiún na Meán

4. *Establish a CTV Stakeholder Working Group:* Convened by DTCSGSM, a CTV Working Group should be established of senior level CnaM and DRCD staff, the CTV sector, and relevant others. An MoU would articulate an agreed understanding of the CTV sector, the roles of each in supporting it, and a coordinated approach. This could be broadened to include community radio. An option might be to create a dedicated *Community Media Fund or Instrument*.
5. *Enhance coordination between DTCSGSM, CnaM and CTV.* Closer coordination is needed immediately to ensure upcoming schemes are coherent and meet sector needs.
6. *Ensure that the current Social Benefits Scheme is offered on an annual basis, and adequately funded.* Reliable, tailored, access to Sound and Vision funding is vital to the Sector's sustainability, and it should expand with the sector.

For Coimisiún na Meán and CTV Sector

7. *Establish a dedicated CTV Archive:* A dedicated community media archive is needed to safeguard the unique value of community-produced content, for re-use and for the future.

The Community Television Association

8. *Develop a vision and framework for the future.* An overall vision of the future of the community media sector is needed internally for the sector and for external representation. The idea of community media hubs is a starting point, and accepted by both CTA and CRAOL.
9. *Build CTV sector and services at national and all-Ireland level:* The CTA should lead the development of new services such as: an all-Ireland CTV service; a single streaming platform; a smartphone App; and resources and guidebooks for CTV production.
10. *Support the Social Benefit Framework:* The CTA should help CTV service providers to implement the Social Benefit Framework methodology to demonstrate benefits generated.

CTV Service Providers

11. *Build Relations with Key Stakeholders:* A key priority for CTV service providers is to reinforce existing relationships and cooperation, and to build new relations, with its key constituents, CBOs, local governance structures, and statutory service providers
12. *Build towards Community Media Hubs:* CTV service providers should seek to develop further, building organically, the idea of community media hubs, offering a collective space for CTV actors to exchange, educate and create, and opportunities to collaborate with other community media entities.

1. Introduction

This report is part of a larger research process commissioned for the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI).⁵ The output includes three reports.⁶

A specific report is dedicated to each of the two community television (CTV) service providers: Dublin Community Television (DCTV) and Cork Community Television (CCTV). This, the main report, includes a general synthesis of these two, as well as a wider analysis of the sector and its dynamics, and a set of recommendations.

Rationale for this Research

Section 72 of the Broadcasting Act 2009⁷ makes provision for the awarding of Community Content Provision Contracts, in effect a licence to broadcast CTV. Section 72(6) states the following:

- (6) The Authority shall conduct, or arrange with members of the local community or community of interest concerned for there to be conducted, a survey, which shall be as comprehensive as is practicable, amongst members of that community for the purpose of ascertaining—
- (a) the extent to which that community is facilitated in the active participation by it in the compilation and transmission of the programme material supplied pursuant to a community content provision contract,
 - (b) the extent to which those members view any broadcasting service on which there is transmitted that programme material, and
 - (c) the opinion of those members with regard to—
 - (i) the quality of that programme material, and
 - (ii) whether that material specifically addresses the interests of their community,
- and shall have regard to the results of such a survey in deciding, in relation to any community content provision contract it proposes to enter into with members of that community next after the conduct of that survey, with whom it shall enter into such a contract and the nature of the terms and conditions it may include in that contract.

This research is in pursuance of that Section, and is part of the pre-licencing process of the two existing licensees, Dublin Community Television (DCTV) and Cork Community Television (CCTV). Both of their licences are due to expire on the 28th April 2024, though, if necessary, they may be extended for short periods by the Coimisiún na Meán (CnM).

The Terms of Reference go somewhat further than indicated in the above Section.

Given that the licences were originally granted in 2006 (DCTV) and 2009 (CCTV), CnM is also interested in a wider review of the context and progress of the sector, exploring its continuing relevance and how it is evolving in the context of major changes in the media sector overall. The CTV sector has a very low profile in Ireland, for reasons that will become apparent later on, and this research thus includes considerable detail about the sector that will be useful to those who are unfamiliar with it.

⁵ Now subsumed into Coimisiún na Meán.

⁶ A further report was produced early on, as a resource to be used by the sector during the research process. Entitled “The Policy and Regulatory Environment for Community Television in Ireland”, it summarised the various public schemes and resources that the community television sector could draw on, past and future.

⁷ This Section included amendments from the Broadcasting Act (2001).

Methodology

This research was contracted on February 1st 2023, with a view to completion by July 30.th The consultant was to devise an appropriate methodology in the context of the Section 72(6) of the 2009 Act; to implement this evaluation in the context of both licensees; and to present a separate report on each of the service providers and an overall report on lessons emerging in the context of issuing licenses in future.

A Research Steering Group was established to oversee the work, comprising relevant staff from the BAI and representatives of the Community Television Association (CTA) and the two licensed CTV channels, DCTV and CTV. This group first met on the 21st February to examine the Inception Report, a draft of which had been submitted on February 15th.

A mixed method approach was adopted to gather data and evidence. Its main components were as follows:

- A series of **39 Key Information Interviews (KIIs)**, mostly one to one, were undertaken throughout the period of the research (See Annex 4). These included eight statutory and institutional officials; 15 KIIs for DCTV and 14 for CCTv including, for both, Board members, volunteers and community producers. A founder of Province 5 Television (P5TV), and a representative of the Irish Film Institute.
- During the course of these interviews, and in separate communications, a large volume of **relevant documentation and data** was identified and retrieved, from the two CTV channels, the BAI and academic sources. These were examined and relevant points integrated into the reports and referenced in footnotes.
- The consultant also **attended the Annual General Meetings** of both DCTV and CCTv, which included a question and answer session about the research.
- **Two surveys**, similar in intent and wording (See Annex 5), were distributed in April, as required by the 2009 Act, targeting selected DCTV and CCTv members, to obtain their views on the relevance and quality of the content. The results were analysed and integrated into the reports.
- A total of eleven **CTV Stories** were gathered, and edited, from community producers, who followed a common set of headings in documenting them. These are contained in annexes to the two individual CTV service provider reports.

During the course of the research, preliminary reports (excluding conclusions and recommendations) were circulated to key stakeholders in order to verify the accuracy of the data and analysis.

Drafts of the three reports were delivered in the first week of June, for review at a Steering Committee meeting on June 8th. The final Reports were delivered on July 1st.

Report Contents

The environment for community television has changed significantly since the first licences were awarded, and continues to evolve today. **Section 2** of this review sets the scene by exploring in some depth the dynamics, past, present and future, that strongly influence the prospects for any future community content licensees to carve out a sustainable model of community television. It covers the roots of community television generally, and then traces its evolution in Ireland over the last thirty years or so.

Section 3 explores the regulatory and policy context, and changes to it over the years.⁸ Looking first at research completed during the planning of DCTV, examining models elsewhere and the needs in Ireland, it then gives an account of the emergence and expansion of the Broadcasting Funding Scheme and the resulting Sound and Vision scheme that has played a key role in the sector. Further targeted support activities from successive regulatory bodies and others are described.

This is followed in **Section 4** by an examination of how community television delivers social benefits, and the nature of these benefits. This deploys a methodology developed recently with BAI support, that includes a community media Social Benefit Framework. The goal of the Framework is to help community media to document and, to a degree, quantify the social benefits generated, that differentiate the sector from public service and commercial television.

Section 5 and **Section 6** address the specific questions raised in the 2009 Broadcasting Act and form the legislative rationale for this research. Section 5 looks at the level and nature of community participation; and Section 6 reports on the results of a survey to assess viewership, relevance and programme quality.

Section 7 is devoted to the challenges relating to financial sustainability facing the sector, summarising conclusions from the reports on DCTV and CCTv.

Overall conclusions regarding the CTV sector and its key characteristics are presented in **Section 8**.

Section 9 presents a set of recommendations, aimed at all key stakeholders in the sector.

⁸ As noted, the research also completed a detailed analysis of the full regulatory and policy context, bringing it up to date with the ongoing implementation of the Future of Media Commission Report. This was circulated to community sector stakeholders during the course of the work.

2. Community Television in Context

The media sector has seen accelerated change over the last two decades in particular, driven especially by the emergence of digital technologies and the Internet as a primary means of social communication. The convergence on digital content and dissemination, and the growth of the Internet as a tool for instant global communication, between individuals and all possible configurations of groups, created the potential for, indeed the inevitability of, a media revolution.

The Future of Media Commission (FOMC) report summarised the ongoing implications for media in Ireland with the following words:

“The coming decade will be highly disruptive for Ireland’s media sector. It presents both exciting opportunities and serious threats to Ireland’s media system. Technological advances, changing consumer behaviour and social needs challenge the media to develop new business models and new ways to engage with audiences, or risk losing them. The spread of misinformation and disinformation through social media and other technology platforms risks undermining public confidence in news and information. The media system faces long-term economic challenges. ...

“One of the greatest challenges facing media is the need to ensure that they are appropriately diverse, accessible, inclusive and representative of contemporary Ireland. There is also a need for greater diversity of representation, including for groups that are currently underrepresented or even invisible in programming, commissioning and production of news and current affairs, arts and culture, sport, Irish language and entertainment.” (page 3)

A key question for this report is whether and where CTV can find a place in this disrupted and disrupting process that is transforming the media landscape in Ireland.

What, if anything, can CTV offer in the above context; and, if it is indeed a potentially significant actor, which CTV models might be most effective and sustainable, and make a significant contribution? And what kinds of actions must be taken to ensure that its potential can be realised?

The Origins of Community Television

Globally, community television emerged as a distinct actor on the media scene in the 1960s and 1970s, often building on the success and growth of community radio across numerous countries.

The first thing to understand about the sector is that its roots are to be found not in the media sector *per se*, but rather as part of a global effort by communities to empower themselves, and to gain greater control over their own futures. While mainstream media practitioners could and did play a role, community media demanded major innovation in media approaches and techniques that would enable people to take media into their own hands and to use them as tools to highlight unreported issues and address community needs, particularly among marginalised groups. Mainstream media, whether commercial or public service (if they were present at all), were regarded by many as too distant and centralised and often compromised by their income sources, to address these needs in any meaningful way.

Community media proponents were not seeking to establish a new *media* sub-sector per se. They saw themselves as emerging from, and being part of, the community empowerment sector.⁹ This continues to distinguish them from other media sectors, even public service media. Community media practitioners regard media as tools to achieve wider goals; not just to inform and educate, as is the remit of public service (still less to secure profits for owners); but to enable communities –both geographically-based and communities of interest–to directly shape and run media entities and to utilise them to achieve their wider goals of empowerment and participative democracy. They seek to go further than promoting freedom of expression, towards embodying the right to communicate¹⁰ in which people can access the tools to widely disseminate their views and build commonalities, tools that are traditionally in the hands only of elites.

Community television flourished, emerging separately and in distinct forms across the world, in Canada, the US, Australia, Europe and Latin America, and in Asia in South Korea, India, Indonesia and Philippines amongst others. In many countries they are an accepted and key part of the media landscape,¹¹ sustaining themselves through a variety of sources (though, importantly, beholden to none) and mobilising huge voluntary activity.

A mapping of community television in Europe found over 520 channels existed in Europe, including three in Ireland at that time, across sixteen countries.¹² The models vary from place to place. For instance, some of the 50 channels in Germany adopt an Open Channel approach, offering mainly access to broadcasting, while others also produce significant content themselves.¹³ Many community media organisations come together under the umbrella of the Community Media Forum Europe¹⁴ (CMFE).

Community Television in Ireland

In Ireland the impetus behind CTV came from several sources. Pioneers of community television and video were already active during the 1980s and early 1990s, such as Navan Community Television

⁹ The interviews undertaken for this research tend to confirm that this continues to be the case. Even independent television producers, who produce high-quality outputs for community television under the Sound & Vision scheme, all agree that community television is different in form, themes and process.

¹⁰ The right to communicate is broader than the rights to freedom of expression in the UNDHR Article 19. “The right to communicate is, in the end, not just about being heard: it must also mean securing access to the information you need; and being listened to by those in power with due consideration for your views. It is about enabling genuine dialogue on equal terms; and it is above all about a right to a response from power-holders to issues raised.” Ó Siochrú, Seán “From theory to practice: The right to communicate”. *Media Development* 2016 /1

<http://wacc-global.live.publishwithagility.com/articles/from-theory-to-practice-the-right-to-communicate>

¹¹ For instance a seminal World Bank handbook for media sector development produced in 2008, entitled *Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability: A Public Interest Approach to Policy Law and Regulation* strongly endorsed the tri-partite system, of public service, community non-profit, and commercial broadcasting. See: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/06e54a63-8319-57be-8d3f-4a0d8572b8bb>

¹² See CMFE Website link:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1hzhZ6Fs0qO1mOCPF5Ef5ftWkM9zkW3ENvFV2sjdkZDw/pub?si_ngle=true&gid=0&output=html The countries are: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. About half of them receive some form of government funding.

¹³ A selection of CTV services can be accessed here: Austria: <https://fs1.tv/english> and <https://www.okto.tv/de>; Norway: <https://frikanelen.no/>; Netherlands: <https://publiekeomroepamsterdam.nl/>; Spain: <https://www.rtvcat/>

¹⁴ <https://www.cmfe.eu/membershiplist>

(later renamed Province 5 TV: P5TV) which first broadcast in 1992, Northern Visions TV (NVTV) in Belfast, Open Channel and Ballymun Communications Coop in Dublin, and numerous informal groups of community video activists using newly-available low-cost equipment.¹⁵ In January 1993, community video and television makers and interested community development groups in Ireland, North and South, met and formed the Community Video Network (CVN), with modest seed funding from Nexus Research Coop and the Combat Poverty Agency. It quickly grew to 24 active members, and registered as a company limited by guarantee. CVN evolved in 1996 into Community Media Network (CMN), with the goal of broadening participation to other forms of community media, including radio, print and photography; taking advantage of synergies between them, and implementing more effective advocacy and lobbying. Before long, a campaign to achieve legislative recognition for community television began to take shape.

CMN secured further funding from EU programmes, such as Integra, and was supported by a Community Employment scheme by the then FÁS. CMN and its partners initiated a range of awareness raising, advocacy, and training activities. These included a regular magazine, *Tracking*, that for several years chronicled developments in to community media; a “Day at the Races” festival to celebrate Dublin’s diverse communities in 1998, captured on video and audio; media training programmes during 1998 and 1999 targeting 15 community organisations seeking to set up a community media initiative in video/television, radio, or photography; and a series of open meetings in several Dublin communities to discuss the concept and desirability of a community television station.

Meanwhile, a new Broadcasting Bill was working its way through the Dáil and Seanad. CMN members and others, including NEAR FM with its recently founded NEAR TV, were building support for and lobbying politicians to gain legal recognition for community television and the right to access cable through a ‘must-carry’ obligation on the provider. Both were achieved when the Oireachtas passed the Broadcasting Act 2001. It had taken almost a decade of research, lobbying, community mobilisation and experimentation to achieve the landmark of the “community content provision contracts” in Section 39 of the 2001 Act.¹⁶

After close collaboration between community television proponents and the then BCI,¹⁷ the CTV Policy statement that emerged in 2004 explicitly acknowledged the dual positioning of community media in both the media and the community empowerment sectors. The definition of community television given there was:

¹⁵ A PhD Thesis traces the roots even further back, casting its net wider: See Margaret Gillan, 2009, “Class Voice and State” PhD Thesis. NUI Maynooth. See; https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/2293/1/m_gillan_thesis.pdf See Also “Class and voice: challenges for grassroots community activists using media in 21st century Ireland.” Margaret Gillan. In *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*. Volume 2 (2): 126 - 148 (November 2010)

<https://docslib.org/doc/7373187/challenges-for-grassroots-community-activists-using-media-in-21st-century-ireland>

¹⁶ The Broadcasting Act (2009) made very few changes of any significance, and reproduced Section 39 of the 2001 Act as Section 72 in the 2009 Act. One difference was that the objectives of community television were revised to include the idea that they must be “seeking to provide a social benefit” (Section 72(2)(b)(1)). The possibility of broadcasting on an MMDS system was also included.

¹⁷ *The Independent Radio and Television Commission* (IRTC) was replaced by the *Broadcasting Commission of Ireland* (BCI) in the Broadcasting Act 2001; which was replaced by the *Broadcasting Authority of Ireland* (BAI) by the 2009 Act; which was in turn abolished and its functions subsumed within the Coimisiún na Meán by the *Online Safety and Media Regulation* (OSMR) Act 2022.

'A Community Television channel is characterised by its ownership and programming, and by its interaction with the community it is licenced to serve. It is owned and controlled by a not-for profit organisation whose structure provides for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large. It should be based on community access and should address the special interests and needs of those it is licenced to serve. In supporting these principles, it should serve as a tool for community development.'

A call for expressions of interest in securing a CTV licence was issued by the BCI in 2003, to which six groups responded.¹⁸ It took several years to award the licences, to P5TV (2006), DCTV (2006) and CCTv (2009). DCTV and CCTv began to plan, and to secure the resources, for their launch – P5TV was already broadcasting via the Chorus Cable network around Navan, enabled by a Ministerial order they had negotiated.

The BAI from the beginning preferred to interact with the sector as a whole, rather than with individual channels. CMN members and others had in 2002 formed an all-Ireland *Irish Community Television Advocacy Group*; and this was followed in 2005 with the *Community Television Training Network* that received funding initially from the BAI and The Wheel¹⁹ for media training during 2005 and 2006. In 2006, the members, encouraged by the BAI, took the step of creating a sector-wide association, and the *Community Television Association (CTA)* was registered as a company limited by guarantee, to represent community television channels, existing and aspiring, north and south. The BAI offered funding to CTA for training and capacity-building, and for networking activities including an annual Community TV Festival through different elements of the *Sectoral Learning and Development* scheme. This continues today as the main source of support for CTV sectoral development and networking.

Thus, key foundational elements had emerged for a community television sector in Ireland, and attention turned to the practical challenges such an endeavour faced.

¹⁸ Three applicants had been jointly involved in the lobbying: CMN for Dublin, Frameworks Films for Cork, and Province 5 Television for Navan. The others were NUIG students for Galway City; Dan Collins Communications for Kerry; and Pavee Point Travellers Centre in Dublin. The latter three did not pursue it to the licence stage.

¹⁹ See <https://www.wheel.ie/>

3. Developing and Supporting the CTV Sector.

From the very beginning securing financial sustainability, especially for core activities, was a major concern of all three of the licenced channels.

Research was undertaken in 2012, supported by Dublin City Council, on funding models elsewhere, including field visits to other CTV channels.²⁰ A variety of means was available in other countries to core-fund community television: in Germany, a percentage of the television licence went to Open Channels; in Denmark it was a combination of the license fee and a levy on commercial television; in the Netherlands, Sweden and New Zealand funding came directly from local government; in the USA 5% of gross revenue came from cable companies; and in Canada, each cable operator had an obligation to directly support a community channel at the request of that community.²¹ There were no precedents for these in Ireland, and the legislative support needed was not present.

Community radio was by then already quite well established in Ireland, and models that could financially and institutionally sustain large and small stations had emerged. Although sometimes precarious, most community radio stations survive through a combination of support from community development and social economy schemes, some targeted support from the BCI/BAI, programme production grants from the Sound and Vision Scheme, fundraising and advertising; supported always by a backbone of volunteers from the community.

But the model for television, for several reasons, would have to be different.

Production of television content is, in general, more complex and labour intensive, and requires additional skills. Thus, community organisations are less readily attracted into it, in terms of making their own productions or participating in the station. More serious is the restricted transmission options available for reaching the intended audience. Radio could erect a tower and antenna which, though entailing an initial capital cost, could transmit a signal live or (with basic equipment) scheduled pre-recorded programmes, and requires minimal maintenance. In Ireland, the only possibility for CTV was through the cable operator, specifically NTL (later rebranded as Virgin Media).²² This requires a physical presence at the 'head-end' of the cable operator, which had to be negotiated; and relatively sophisticated equipment and software to play-out the signal and schedule the programmes. Synchronising the sound and visual signal with the technical specifications of the cable operator requires ongoing attention and adjustment, and could be resource intensive.

Furthermore, unlike for community radio, only a proportion of the target group could in principle access the signal i.e. those with cable television subscriptions. And since the cable operator's electronic programme guide (EPGs) assigned channels 802 to 804 to community television, they fell outside the usual range of channels searched.

Being unable to easily access the target audience—audience-reach sustainability—had a knock on effect for awareness-raising in general, and especially for fundraising, through advertising or donations. And in applying for support under community employment or social enterprise schemes,

²⁰ *Building Community Through Television*, Dublin City Development Board 2002 page 49.

²¹ These options are described in *Building Community Through Television*, Dublin City Development Board 2002.

²² The other possibility was when the national digital terrestrial television system was being established by RTÉ. Community television lobbied to be included in this, but did not succeed. As configured in Ireland, it seems to be a highly expensive option.

a smaller potential audience size could, with some justification, be seen as reducing the potential for generating benefits among the communities.²³

Thus, the newly-licensed CTV service providers had to secure the capital costs associated with broadcasting and the expertise needed to maintain the system, while promoting the service to the community, and encouraging and enabling content production; but without a key mainstay of most community radio stations in the form of community employment or social enterprise schemes.

The BAI and the Sound and Vision Scheme

The CTA and individual CTV service providers lobbied initially, during the passage of the Broadcasting Act 2001, to secure one per cent of the television licence fee for the funding of the sector, arguing that CTV, like RTÉ, generated public service benefits. This never gained any serious traction; an obstacle may have been that such an ongoing public subsidy could entail devising and legislating for onerous obligations, as it does for RTÉ. However, the Broadcasting (Funding) Bill was soon introduced in the Dáil, as the nascent channels were preparing to apply for a licence, and this appeared to offer the best opportunity to secure even a small amount of regular public funding.

The Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003, by establishing the **Broadcasting Funding Scheme**, enabled the creation by the BCI in 2005 of the **Sound and Vision Scheme**, using a proportion of the television licence fee, initially set at 5% and later raised to 7%: the latter amounting to about €14 million annually. It was open to all broadcast media producers, as long they had secured advance agreement from a licensed free to air broadcaster operating in the State.

Community channels acknowledge the huge benefits that the scheme has brought to community producers, and credit it with funding, with almost €5.5 million, a large and diverse set of community television productions over almost two decades, and with enhancing the skills of many community producers. It has sometimes enabled the emergence of unique formats and production processes that differentiate CTV from commercial or public service media, and that generate distinct benefits for communities. Without the Sound and Vision Scheme, it is unlikely that the CTV sector could have survived at all, and developed its distinctive production characteristics.

Yet the CTV sector had hoped that successive broadcasting-related Acts would focus more specifically on the distinguishing characteristics of CTV, and also enable funding for the core costs of the CTV licensed service providers.

At a minimum, such core costs involve the technology and expertise required for programme scheduling, transmission to and play-out with the cable operator, reporting to the BAI/BCI, and assisting community producers in negotiating the Sound and Vision Scheme. Administration of an office and a registered company, including items such as VAT registration and an annual audit, also consume time and funds. Outreach to the community is also a critical and time-consuming activity. Volunteer effort can and does contribute time, but finance is needed to cover costs and to ensure regular minimum expert assistance.²⁴

A policy study published by the BAI in 2021, in preparation for the new community media policy, noted the following:

²³ At least until the Social Benefit Framework was developed later on. See further on.

²⁴ The channels themselves had calculated, during discussion with the BAI in 2019, that operational costs alone would come to €50,000 annually.

“The inability [of S&V] to support a contribution towards core funding [of community media], from staff and office costs through to insurance... and transmission, especially for community television, has been a major source of criticism of the Sound and Vision scheme since its inception... Stricter enforcement of Sound and Vision conditions has also closed off the small contribution that it had in the past indirectly made to certain overheads.”²⁵

The sector had hoped that a specific objective of the programme funding scheme established under the Act²⁶ i.e. to “develop local and community broadcasting”, would mean that the Scheme could be tailored to community television, since neither commercial nor public service media enjoyed a similar reference. The Sound and Vision Scheme could thus, the sector believed, have legitimately been designed in a manner that would allow community producers to pay the CTV channels for the costs of the outreach and support, and even for transmission. There was thus disappointment when the Scheme, as launched, treated all media sub-sectors the same.

The Broadcasting Act (2009) incorporated both the 2001 Act and the Broadcasting (Finance) Act 2003 (and transformed the BCI into the BAI). It broadened the Broadcasting Funding Scheme’s objectives with the inclusion of “The Authority in preparing a scheme, may have regard to the developmental needs of community broadcasters.”²⁷ It added a further clause that had the potential to address some CTV concerns. The Broadcasting Fund could now support: “such ancillary measures as are necessary to support schemes ... to fund programmes.”²⁸ Despite sector lobbying, no ancillary measures were included in subsequent Sound and Vision schemes that might enable community channels to claim some of their costs from community producers.

Other concerns were also expressed by the sector over the years.

The possibility of funding community news and current affairs programmes was sought, which it was hoped would develop as a mainstay of the community media sector. The rationale for this was that, unlike public service and commercial broadcasters, community broadcasters had no mandatory licence obligations to produce news or current affairs, and that therefore such content would certainly, in the case of community media, have been additional. The community media sector as a whole had also requested that Sound and Vision Rounds would be ring-fenced for community media, with unique processes and a tailored set of programme selection criteria, the rationale being that community television’s goals and production processes were very different to those especially of commercial television.

No allowances were made for the fact that many Scheme applicants, as CBOs, were going through a learning process, and were engaging with media and grant applications for the first time. Sometimes, applications from the same group and on the same theme were turned down by successive Rounds (despite being encouraged to reapply), with little or no constructive comment, leading to disillusionment for the group including in the CTV service provider itself. A tailored approach, with two or three stages designed to improve the application, would, the sector argued, be more appropriate (an ‘NCT’ approach, as it has been described).

²⁵ See page 8: *Community Media Policy and Regulation for the Future. A Paper for the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland* <https://www.bai.ie/en/download/136026/>

²⁶ 2003 Act Section 3 (1) (f); 2009 Act Section 155 (1) (f).

²⁷ Section 175 (5)

²⁸ Section 54 (1)(f)

Finally, for community television in particular, the sector had hoped that the obligation on cable operators²⁹ might also explicitly extend to providing technical assistance and equipment to ensure a quality signal was broadcast, as distinct from merely requiring them to “transmit as a broadcasting service” at no charge. CTV had also sought an obligation to be included higher on the EPG with other national channels.

Thus, the sector’s lobbying failed overall to achieve even a degree of sustainable income for the channels.

Part of the difficulty for the BAI in acceding to many CTV sector requests was that it must be careful not to offer subsidies or supports that might be regarded by the European Commission as promoting unfair competition through state subsidy. Furthermore, the BAI argue that the Broadcasting Act 2009 contains no specific basis that might allow the BAI to offer core funding *per se*. The Future of Media Commission (FoMC) report recognised this in their findings on community media, and recommended that a Community Media Scheme be established encompassing wider core funding, outside of content related development.

Further BAI Activities with the Sector

The BAI, at least partially, recognised the challenges facing the CTV licenced providers and, separately from the Sound and Vision Scheme, offered additional, albeit modest, supports. These did not contribute to core costs, but were targeted at strengthening capacities and governance of individual channels and enabling sector networking through the CTA. These were supported under the BAI’s *Sectoral Learning and Development (SLD)* scheme, which also includes the *Community Broadcasting Support Scheme (CBSS)*.

Under the SLD scheme, CTA has received annually, based on a plan of proposed activities, a sectoral development grant. This amounted in 2022 to €36,000, and in 2023 to €34,000. Using this, CTA organises a Community Television Festival and supports several other specified sector-building activities for its members.³⁰ Earlier, from 2009 to 2010, the BAI funded CTA to undertake an extensive consultation process within the wider community television and video sector throughout Ireland. This yielded a *Charter for Community Television in Ireland*, endorsed by all those involved. (See Annex 2) The goal was to develop a vision for the sector, document the principles guiding it, and facilitate awareness-raising among others.

During 2018, the BAI financed a series of discussions and consultation meetings with community media organisations,³¹ resulting in March 2019 of the BAI’s *Community Media Action Plan*.³² This detailed a set of proposals to reinforce both radio and CTV sectors over the coming years. The Action Plan declined a request from both community television channels for core funding, arguing that the 2009 Act “does not provide for the BAI to administer a fund providing core operational costs for community broadcasters”. However, it extended the licence period of both, which was due to expire in April 2020, and noted that the statutorily required research (i.e. the present study) could progress “thinking and discussion about a viable community TV model in Cork and Dublin.”

²⁹ Section 77 (8)-(10)

³⁰ In 2023, for instance, these included: The CTV Festival; training in multi-camera recording and mixing for Near TV; CCTV volunteer recruitment campaign; all-Ireland CTV co-operation seminar; training on live streaming CTV and Scheduling and Programming 2023; sponsoring a visit to a UK channel.

³¹ These, and the Report, were facilitated by independent consultant Niamh Farren.

³² See www.bai.ie/en/download/134905/

The Action Plan also commits the BAI to engage with Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and Pobal regarding the review of the Community Support Programme (CSP) “with a view to ensuring that the scheme remains open and relevant for community broadcasters” and that it will “continue to develop its strategic engagement with Pobal to ensure alignment where possible in relation to compliance requirements on community broadcasters.” Subsequently, the BAI shared strategic developments with the Department staff responsible for the CSP programme, including explaining the relevance of the Social Benefits Framework in this context.

However, despite interest being expressed by CTV channels in entering the programme, in April 2023, the Pobal official responsible for the most recent round of the CSP scheme indicated that community television will not be included, suggesting that the sector is the responsibility of the BAI.

The Action Plan also included a commitment to develop and pilot, funded by the CBSS, an evaluation methodology that could measure the benefits of community radio. Two reports were produced.³³ As part of this, a *Social Benefit Framework* was developed (See Annex 1). While this initially focused on community radio, it was also explicitly designed to be relevant to community television, and involved consultation with the sub-sector.³⁴

The design and acceptance by the sector of the Social Benefit Framework was significant. For the first time, the sector could point to a research methodology and process that identified and documented its unique features and characteristics as both community development and media. The community media sector is frequently confused with, for instance, private sector local media, such as local radio, even in official circles.³⁵ The methodology associated with the Framework also means that the benefits can be empirically identified and described. Furthermore, the BAI could now use the Framework in deliberating on community media productions that should be granted funding under various schemes.

In June 2021, following an initial in-depth consultation and independent policy review,³⁶ the BAI also launched a new *Community Media Policy*.³⁷ This was designed to bring the separate radio and TV policies together but also to move the idea of community media into the digital age. A number of features distinguish it from earlier policy.

First, for the first time it encompasses community radio and community television within a single policy, treated as elements of a single entity, community media. Community media of all kinds are recognised, in the definition there, as sharing common principles. The community media sector is thus seen as a continuum:

³³ <https://www.bai.ie/en/bai-publishes-report-highlighting-social-benefits-of-community-radio/>

³⁴ For the summary Report and the Framework see:

http://www.bai.ie/en/media/sites/2/dlm_uploads/2020/06/Community-Radio-Delivering-Social-Benefit-.pdf

³⁵ For instance, no representative of, or anyone with any significant knowledge of, the community sector was appointed to the 2010 BAI Board. CTA, based on information received under a Freedom of Information request, published a detailed report in May 2010: *The Appointment of Members to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland: An Analysis of the Process and Outcomes relating to Community Broadcasting*. It found that: “For the first time since community broadcasting was licenced in Ireland by the BAI’s predecessors, first by the IRTC then by the BCI, neither community broadcasting nor community development expertise is available at the top level to inform its deliberations.”

³⁶ See <https://www.bai.ie/en/download/136026/> *Community Media Policy and Regulation for the Future. A Paper for the BAI*. October 2020. Seán Ó Siochrú.

³⁷ <https://www.bai.ie/en/bai-launches-community-media-policy/>

“...from a small volunteer-run community radio station up to a multi-purpose community media hub offering a multiplicity of media production tools, education facilities and disseminating content across several platforms.”

Second, treating community media as a single sector points to the need for the sector, as perceived by the BAI, to acknowledge the convergence in technologies and in dissemination platforms across all media. Accessing community media output is less about the specific platform, whether broadcast, cable, internet or indeed print; and more about:

“...ensuring prominence and ‘findability’ across platforms. Platform neutrality facilitates the dissemination of community content that generates public benefit to a larger range of citizens within the community and beyond. To realise this potential, citizens must be able to find, recognise, access and engage with that content easily in a rapidly evolving media landscape.” (page 8)

While it is clear that community radio and community television wish to retain their individual identities, they also recognise the value of acting together, as well as the fact that all media are converging towards various digital forms of access and dissemination. The idea of developing a community media hub that would offer a wide range of activities, resources and services to communities, many of them virtual, across all forms of media is gaining traction in the sector. CCTV is already in the process of transforming itself into the Cork Community Media Hub; and the DCTV Committee and several key members recognise the merit in this approach as they relaunch their vision of the future.

Finally, a recent development with the Sound and Vision Scheme is highly relevant.

In late 2022, Round 48 exclusively targeted community media, both radio³⁸ and television, in line with earlier requests by the sector, and was tailored specifically to the sector. It was clearly addressing several of the issues that the sector had raised over the years. Called the *Social Benefit Round*, and supported by the Broadcasting Fund, this new practice is expected to continue. The amount available for the entire sector was €750,000, with a cap of €75,000 for an individual CTV broadcaster. It specifically refers to the objective in the 2009 (Article 154 (5)) to “have regard to the developmental needs of community broadcasters.” It is explicit in its intent, and reflects the level of mutual understanding achieved during the earlier consultation:

“The BAI understands the financial pressures on community TV and radio broadcasting contractors and in particular, the level of focus that must be given to securing funding for the ongoing staffing and operations of the community broadcasting services. For a number of such services, this leads to less capacity to progress other areas of the service such as outreach, training and development, recruitment, and retention of volunteers. In this regard, it can limit the level to which a community broadcasting service fulfills its social benefit objects.”

For CTV, the Round aims at strengthening the relationship between the channels and their communities, resulting in more diverse content production and active community participation. While the current running costs of the station could not be covered, the cost of funding an outreach staff position was eligible.

³⁸ Two previous rounds had been open exclusively to community radio operators.

Under this, in March 2023 both DCTV and CCTv received grants of about €75,000 each to work collectively with CBOs. Round 48 also references the Social Benefit Framework through the inclusion of a mandatory assessment criteria:

“To what extent does the proposal provide a social benefit to the community... (such as through social inclusion, audience empowerment, opportunities for community members and/or individuals to enhance and improve their personal and social skills, training and workshops, facilitation of collective actors, and so forth)?”

The sector has warmly welcomed this Round, and is lobbying to ensure that this approach becomes a regular feature. It is the first significant recognition within the scheme that the sector has distinct characteristics and goals, and the sector sees it as the beginning of a learning process for both sides.

The sector hopes that these indications of a deeper understanding of their differentiating features will carry into the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act (2022) (OSMR) and the FOMC Implementation Strategy being designed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCSGSM). The latter, in particular, is currently developing new media support schemes, some of which are highly relevant to the CTV sector.

4. Delivering Social Benefits

The two individual channel reports, for DCTV and CCTv, examine the benefits generated by CTV for their members and target groups. These are combined here, while differentiating as appropriate between them, to offer a wider view of the benefits being created.

The benefits generated by the CTV sector as a whole go beyond those that the licensed CTV channels can claim credit for directly, to include those generated by community content producers (among which the channels themselves are numbered) to which the channels offer the key support, broadcasting and dissemination functions. While community video producers pre-existed CTV, and continue to pursue work in parallel with and separately from CTV, the existence of CTV has enabled the sector to receive funding from the Sound and Vision and other schemes; and offered the opportunity to broadcast (albeit with the limitations outlined further on) via a mainstream provider, as well as to live-stream. To be seen on mainstream television is perceived as a key value among many community organisations and their clients and is often a major motivating factor behind many community television productions.³⁹

Yet assessing the extent to which community television is effecting positive social change is not straightforward. This was the reason the BAI, in collaboration with the community media sector, developed the Community Media Social Benefit Framework⁴⁰ (see Annex 1), and an associated evaluation methodology. This is designed to facilitate the generation of evidence of these benefits and to some degree to quantify, or at least describe, them. Certain components of this methodology have been applied in this research, including the production of a number of qualitative CTV Stories.

CTV activities and the benefits generated

Before presenting some initial findings using the Social Benefit Framework, types of activities that generate these benefits are reviewed, summarising what is presented in the two individual CTV reports, and in the eleven CTV Stories presented in Annexes.

- *Getting a message out:* Hundreds of community groups and a number of statutory bodies, most working in areas and on themes of disadvantage and social development, have deployed the medium of video and television, through co-productions and on their own, to disseminate information and a story, chosen by them, to audiences in Dublin, Cork and sometimes further afield. While audience size has most likely been modest, at least compared to mainstream television channels, they also reach their target groups by other means, to stimulate discussion around the issues raised. Often, the issues covered have been neglected by mainstream media.
- *Celebrating and reinforcing identity and place:* The goal of some productions is less about information dissemination than about celebrating and reinforcing a sense of identity among a given community. Both CCTv and DCTV have engaged in, and supported, community producers to engage in co-productions with many marginalised and disadvantaged groups, as well as city and rural communities of all types. The goal is to capture and document social history, to learn lessons from it, to raise important current issues and to generally amplify the voices of

³⁹ This appears to be true even among young people. A recent survey of a group of young people by the Cork ETB about community television found that a large majority of them think it is important to have their work broadcast on television, as well as social media. (Source: personal communication)

⁴⁰ Full documentation can be downloaded here: <http://www.bai.ie/en/download/134920>

communities that are otherwise not heard or are ignored. A key function of this is often to reinforce a sense of identity and place.

- *Delivering directly on vocational and creative skills, and media literacy:* CTV has provided individual members and member organisations a very significant amount of training in the basics of video/television production and editing. It is reasonable to conclude that these contribute to vocational skills, enhance creativity, and significantly contribute to media and digital literacy. Several hundred received such training and mentoring during Phase 1 of DCTV, and CCTv has targeted marginalised communities with media literacy skills training, and is currently launching a youth training programme in collaboration with a statutory organisation. These have included those from immigrant groups, people with disability and others facing disadvantage.
- *Enabling community producers and co-productions.* The CTV service providers, by offering resources and support and by supporting other members to secure funding through Sound and Vision scheme and other sources, have enabled a huge volume of community-produced video and television output, amounting to many thousands of hours and multiplying the benefits described above. Some is highly innovative, including what can be called a new genre of ‘street’ content in Ireland, produced at very low-cost and sometimes modest production values in conventional terms, but using inventive approaches and innovative content.

Community Media Social Benefit Framework.

The Social Benefit Framework has enabled a systematic analysis of the benefits delivered by community media. Its main implementation up to now has been in the community radio sector, and this is the first time it has been applied to the CTV sector.

The Framework defines the social benefit offered by community media as follows:

“Benefits to individuals or collective actors in the community that enhance their lives socially, culturally or economically, or in terms of development, empowerment and/or well-being, that otherwise would not have come about.”

Six types of social benefit that community media can generate are then specified, each with a set of indicators. Below, a preliminary and approximate attempt is made to assess which of the six types are most relevant to CTV in Ireland, based on the indicators, and drawing on the interviews, the CTV Stories and documentary data.

A more complete analysis, following the full methodology, would be needed to draw more comprehensive evidence-based and quantifiable conclusions. Nevertheless, this offers an overview, based on significant evidence, of the types and extent of social benefits generated by CTV.

Drawing on the evidence, each of the social benefit indicators is scored on a scale of 0 to 5, where:

- **A score of 0** indicates there is *no evidence the CTV generated benefits in this area*; to:
- **A score of 5** indicates there is reasonable evidence that *significant social benefit was generated for its target group in this area*.

While this is a crude measurement, and involves a high degree of expert judgement based on largely qualitative experience, it nevertheless offers a reasonable summary pending further work on this in the future. Concrete examples can be consulted in the eleven individual CTV ‘Stories’ documented in annexes to the individual CCTv and DCTV review reports.

Social Benefits	Indicators of Social Benefits of each Type	Score 0-5	Comment
1. <u>Individuals</u> , especially minorities and those marginalised, are <u>growing in confidence and creativity</u> and/or <u>reinforcing a sense of belonging</u> , directly from engaging with the station.	SB 1 is being achieved through...: 1.1. placements from community organisations working with marginalised/disadvantaged people 1.2. CTV volunteers making programmes and in administration and support 1.3. training of marginalised/disadvantaged individuals; and taking in interns from external entities 1.4. isolated or marginalised individuals viewing programmes addressing their interests	2 4 4 2	Placements are mainly short-term volunteers with community producers, rather than the CTV service providers. DCTV mobilised dozens of volunteers, in studio. CCTv has a strong group of volunteers, especially in admin. Large numbers of volunteers received training at low or no charge, from CTV stations and community producers. Some were disadvantaged. Virgin/NTL viewer figures were probably low but online were higher.
2. Individuals are <u>enhancing their employment prospects</u> , through gaining skills and confidence reinforcing community identify	SB 2 is being achieved through... 2.1. media training that enhances vocational prospects. 2.2. volunteer opportunities that enhance employment prospects through personal development and skills acquisition 2.3. staff experience and training that enhance their vocational prospects.	2 1 5	A small number of members are known to have gained a media job. Volunteers have moved to media production, and a few to employment. Phase 1 DCTV staff built skills and maintain work in media/creative sector. CCTv has no staff.
3. Community members are <u>informed and aware</u> of what is happening around their community	SB3 is achieved through the use by community members of information broadcast by the station, in the form of... 3.1. regular bulletins of everyday information such as traffic, weather events etc. 3.2. specific social bulletins such as death notices, social events, etc. 3.3. transactional information services such as Job Search or Marketplace delivered free or at low-cost	0 2 0	CTV never engaged in these. CCTv coverage local/national elections, with interviews several years; a bulletin board was also operational. CTV has not been able to offer these.
4. Community members are <u>responding more effectively to issues</u> —local to global—because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information	SB 4 is achieved through the station: 4.1. producing/broadcasting content and format that addresses local to global, with diverse views presented in a balanced and constructive format, in studio and outside broadcasting 4.2. providing facilities and resources for volunteers to do the same, covering issues of local interest and concern	4 5 1 3	The CTV sector produced a large volume of programmes on a huge variety of social economic and cultural issues. Quality and balance was uneven. It also broadcast relevant content from other countries. DCTV offered studios, equipment, training and support to volunteers; CCTv had no studio; community producers worked a lot with them. CTV has the resources to produce only very limited news items,

	<p>4.3. referencing local advocacy groups when reporting on news items</p> <p>4.4. actively engaging in the community through projects, advocacy and interactions on issues or local interest and concern</p>		CTV sector engages extensively through all aspects of productions, launches and dissemination.
<p>5. <u>Collective actors (CBOs, NGOs etc.)</u> are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity <u>to achieve their goals</u></p>	<p>SB5 is achieved through the Station...</p> <p>5.1 providing airtime to local CBOs to discuss and present their work, issues and requests to the public</p> <p>5.2 facilitating CBOs to produce dedicated regular slots or entire programmes, including training and facilities</p> <p>5.3 actively collaborating, beyond broadcasting, with collective actors for advocacy and joint work on issues relating to social benefit.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The CTV sector has facilitated a number of community organisations to develop and broadcast their views.</p> <p>DCTV enabled CBOs, through its studio, training and support for Sound & Vision applications, to produce programmes.</p> <p>CTV engages with CBOs in some joint advocacy but it was limited.</p>
<p>6. The community <u>sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced</u> through interaction and collective action.</p>	<p>SB6 is achieved through the Station...</p> <p>6.1. bringing diverse community groups in interactive programmes to discuss local issues, including to deal with conflicts and tensions</p> <p>6.2. helping to mobilise community members around issues of concern locally, for collective action, advocacy, etc. in an inclusive manner</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Some community producers produce in dialogue-type outputs, facilitated by CTV Service providers.</p> <p>DCTV itself did not mobilise the community in areas of concern to them. It contributed through supporting CBOs etc.</p>

5. Community Participation

The Terms of Reference, pursuant of the Broadcasting Act 2009, seek an analysis of the extent to which the local community or community of interest is “facilitated in the active participation by it in the compilation and transmission of the programme material and supplied pursuant to a community content provision contract.” The research Steering Committee agreed that this question should be interpreted broadly.

In both Cork and Dublin the emergence of CTV channels was driven by groups of community activists who believed, based on their experience and practices, that video and television could make a significant contribution to community development and empowerment. This is what motivated the sector as a whole and enabled a decade-long mobilisation and lobbying campaign that in the end yielded, in the Broadcasting Act 2001, the possibility of licenced CTV stations. In both cities a much wider range of community organisations became involved in the process, even before licences were granted and the channels launched. A participatory approach, of actively reaching out to the community, was thus, from the outset, built into the process of developing CTV stations.⁴¹

It is no surprise, then, that CTV has developed several modalities for its members and wider communities to participate.

CCTv and DCTV adopted different legal structures, the former a company limited by guarantee (not-for-profit), and the latter as a cooperative with the Register of Friendly Societies. Both options proved adequate to the transparency, governance and administrative requirements, and were structured to enable opportunities for members to participate fully in the democratic elections of a Board and other processes.

The approach began to diverge as, early on, DCTV decided (by taking on loans) to put a major emphasis on DCTV itself as a production and training facility. This it did with considerable success, until a financial crisis hit in 2013. DCTV provided dozens of members with basic training in studio and outside production, and both DCTV and these volunteers generated hundreds of hours of outputs working in a variety of formats and subject matter. DCTV was itself also producing high quality content with Sound and Vision funding, and enabling other community producers to seek such funding.

CCTv, on the other hand, found from the beginning that renting and equipping a studio was beyond the means and resources available. Though this remains an aspiration, it decided initially to focus on helping its members, community groups and independent producers, to secure Sound and Vision funding and, in the case of Frameworks Films, the main actor, to build partnerships with CBOs and help them with productions. CCTv was seen primarily as a vehicle to broadcast these, but it was enabling the community producers to provide training at a significant scale during productions.

Both DCTV and CCTv created a members’ Programme Sub-Group to identify appropriate content to broadcast, newly produced and existing, including international content of relevance. DCTV had a second Scheduling Sub-Group, to sort the content into schedules for broadcasting. For both channels, however, these tasks after a period began to fall back on the existing Board members and a small number of committed volunteers.

⁴¹ P5TV in Navan had been established by a group of local enthusiasts, rather than as a result of a determined community mobilisation process, and the participation of community organisations was lower.

The technical end of scheduling, ensuring that a quality signal is delivered to the cable operator and that transmission times are recorded, requires some technical skills. The legislation, in referring to the community's active participation in the "compilation and transmission of the programme material" was unlikely to have had these technical aspects in mind. Yet both CCTv and DCTV have been fortunate by being able to draw on technically capable and highly-committed volunteers who, with at most very occasional payment, have managed to keep the systems running (though a combination of problems saw DCTV effectively off air for extended periods in recent years).

Over the last decade, which has seen difficult times financially for both stations, opportunities for members to participate in management, administration and activities of the stations have contracted. The annual CTV Festivals, funded by BAI and now run alternately between Dublin and Cork, offer members an opportunity from both stations to get together and exchange ideas and views. But these are relatively modest affairs. Neither channel has been able to support an office or venue where members can more casually and informally get together, share experiences and learn new things.

DCTV maintains a membership list of about 150, and keeps them informed, about half open the communications sent to them and a much smaller number actively engage. This, it is hoped, will change soon with the relaunch of the channel. The new DCTV Sound & Vision project is also intended to revive and recalibrate the relationship between DCTV and community development organisations, through the employment of an Outreach and Training Coordinator to enable at least eight member organisations to create their own content.

CCTv, coinciding with the onset of COVID, decided to move towards a new institutional arrangement, designed ultimately to enable a wider range of activities to develop under the CCTv umbrella, with the creation of the Cork Community Media Hub. Membership is envisaged to comprise CBOs, rather than individuals, and it is through these that CCTv and the Hub will engage with the wider public in Cork. An advantage of this approach is that it will facilitate collective targeting of marginalised groups and those under-represented in the media, through these CBOs. With the new Sound and Vision funded project, CCTv is working with the Cork Equality and Sustainable Community Alliance (CESCA) members, active in a range of social development issues. CCTv/the Hub envisages working through CESCA in future projects, and expanding membership through building practical and organic relations with them.

Overall, opportunities available to members of CCTv and DCTV to participate in the channels go well beyond the narrow range envisaged in the legislation, building on their roots in community development and empowerment.

They include opportunities to participate across all areas of governance and management; to obtain media training, including in what might be termed advanced media literacy, either directly with the channels or through community producers, and to co-produce programmes of interest to them. Members are facilitated in making their own productions, in the case of DCTV including the provision of studios and equipment; and in both cases through facilitating access, and often through concrete advice and support, to the Sound and Vision Scheme.

Yet a major challenge has been to sustain the relationships that have been built up over time by both channels, in the course of co-productions and other activities. The key to building a CTV sector, both

channels have concluded with some justification, is to be able to sustain ongoing relationships with community-based organisations and with the statutory organisations delivering social and other relevant services.

There are several obstacles to this.

First is the funding required to maintain an outreach service-ideally a full time staff member-that can identify and renew areas and opportunities of mutual interest. This function would need to be backed up by, and embedded in a space, where CBOs and community producers can exchange ideas and resources. Both channels believe that such a physical space, in a suitable and accessible location, is vital to the future of the sector and to realising its potential to deliver on social benefit. (The new Sound and Vision project will offer an opportunity to test this out in practice.)

Both channels also aspire to a production facility that they can make available to community and statutory service organisations to co-produce relevant content, allowing them to choose their appropriate level of active participation, and enabling the production of topical and even live output in a variety of studio and non-studio formats.

6. Viewership and Programme Quality

Viewer Access and numbers

As compared to their mainstream counterparts, CTV channels have tended to concentrate most effort on the production, support and capacity-building side, perhaps sometimes even at the expense of promoting viewership numbers. The goal of CTV is to generate social benefits, not all of which can be realised by viewing programmes. Much of such benefits spring from members' participation in the full range of activities pursued by the stations, described in previous sections. Such participation is more likely to have a positive impact, especially on CTV's target groups, through building capacities, self-confidence and media literacy, than would simply viewing content.

Nevertheless, enabling and encouraging as many viewers as possible is important to them. The content generated is intended to facilitate social change and empowerment, by producing and disseminating useful content, enhancing a sense of community and identity particularly among disadvantaged groups, and raising awareness about neglected issues.

Ensuring that members and wider target groups can access the content faces a number of challenges.

The BAI license enables them to broadcast on Virgin Media's cable networks. Viewer figures are unavailable; and Virgin Media has not responded to requests for figures of households passed or the number of subscribers. But it is likely that the viewership of either channel on cable is low. There are a number of reasons for this.

DCTV's and CTV's efforts to maximise cable audience size is at a disadvantage as compared to other public service content providers. Virgin Media allocated them, from the beginning, EPG numbers 802 and 803 respectively, so they lack prominence on the screens of cable subscribers and viewers are unlikely to happen upon them regularly.

Second, they lack budgets to promote the channels. While both make some use of social media, and support websites, word of mouth is the main means by which communities and individuals can become aware of their existence as a broadcasting channel.

Furthermore, developing a programme schedule and a reliable play-out system to Virgin Media cable requires sophisticated software and equipment and technical expertise. In the absence of core funding, both channels have depended on small grants or diversions from modest income, skilled volunteers, and sometimes the goodwill (often informal) of some Virgin Media staff. DCTV, in particular, has been unable to access these in the last few years and content and the quality of signal have suffered as a result.

Both stations have also developed alternative means for members and the public to access their content. At different times, each has supported live-streaming of content (sometimes also live transmission of events), and CCTV in particular now offers reliable live-streaming. In parallel, it has also developed a pilot for a Video on Demand (VOD) service and has begun to populate it. DCTV was forced to discontinue its live broadcasting and VOD service after its financial crisis, but is in the process of redeveloping them. Much of its content is available only through commercial services such as YouTube and Vimeo, though this is disorganised and unsystematic. Some of its key community content providers, especially NearTV, have a well-developed and indexed VOD service, where much content broadcast on DCTV can be viewed.

Access to live-streaming and VOD, of course, require a broadband internet connection, which is costly, and unavailable in parts of Cork County, a further barrier to access.

CTV channels and community producers, coming from a video activist and community development background, have also developed and implemented other means to reach their audiences.

As noted earlier, most community television outputs are co-productions with CBOs or groups actively involved in the topic and themes being covered. On completion of programmes, these reach out to their communities to help organise one or more community launches and screenings, targeting the most relevant audiences. These usually include a question and answer session or debate, deepening the impact for those attending. This is also an opportunity to generate interest in watching the output on cable—and the fact that it is broadcast on a licensed television system is often highly valued by the target communities. Many of the CBOs also circulate the content more widely, to members and clients, and sometimes potential donors to raise funds.

Overall, the number of viewers of community television in Ireland is impossible to estimate. Certainly, it is modest compared to the figures for mainstream television and indeed given the huge volumes of output that have been produced over the last 15 years or so. These numbers would certainly increase significantly if the barriers mentioned above were addressed.⁴²

It can also be argued that the *quality* of viewing, the impact it has on the viewer, especially in community screenings that closely target the most relevant groups, is much higher than that of mainstream content. Figures from DCTV, in particular, present a plausible claim to more than 2 million views on YouTube of productions in its early years. This strongly suggests that viewership could rise in the context of organised promotional activities, and a dynamic generated on social media and other less formal means of promotion.

The volume, and value, of CTV content

Before considering relevance and quality, a few words are merited on the sheer volume of content produced by community television.

It is not possible to precisely quantify the number of hours of original programmes that has been produced over the last 15 years, content that would not exist had community television not been present in Ireland. But it is undoubtedly a very large figure, coming to many hundreds, even thousands, of hours. Those funded by Sound and Vision alone come to several hundred hours. However, far more have been created by community producers, on very modest or even no budgets, with a view specifically to be broadcast on CCTV and DCTV, and on P5TV until its closure. The DCTV model of a walk-in studio and accessible training resulted in hundreds of programmes and short clips annually over a period of about four years. Community producers such as Frameworks Films in Cork, and Near TV and Ballymun Communications in Dublin, have produced a continuous stream of co-productions with their communities, and covered innumerable community events.

⁴² In terms of the potential of community media, it is interesting to note the figures in the recent Digital News Report, Ireland's national survey of media use in Ireland co-published by CnM. Community radio, in terms of the 'most frequently used brands' from 2017 – 2023, comes in marginally below local and regional newspapers, and above many newspapers including the Business Post, the Herald and The Times, as well as TG4 Nuacht. See:

<https://www.cnam.ie/publicly-funded-news-services-important-for-society-digital-news-report-ireland-2023/>

The difficulty in estimating the volume comes back again to the resources available to these channels. While each was required to produce programme schedules for the BAI, such was the pressure of time on volunteers that the task even of noting and documenting *new* programmes broadcast was never systematically undertaken (though partial records would exist with the BAI).

A much bigger issue is the preservation of these programmes themselves, in a form that can be archived and used as a resource for current and future media makers. Indeed, interviews suggest that it is likely that much of this content has already been lost or has been widely dispersed.

Ballymun Communications is in the process of completing an archive of its productions between 1983 and 2013, with the Irish Film Institute (IFI) and funded by the Sound and Vision Archive Scheme. It will be launched in a series of events, local and national, later in 2023.

In a direct communication with this research,⁴³ the IFI does not hold back on the value of this archive:

“The CnaM/IFI Ballymun Community Films project comprises some 700 films and 1,200 hours of footage in total. The bulk of this footage was created by volunteers, trainees and staff of Ballymun Communications between the years 1983 and 2013. Taken together, the collection depicts the community through the decline of the old Ballymun estate to its post-1997 regeneration, focussing on the people and organisations who helped to keep the community together through an extended period of upheaval and uncertainty.”

...As a contemporary record of urban Dublin in the late twentieth century, it is unparalleled in its scope and range. As an ongoing document of a single community over three decades, there has been nothing like it in the history of Irish film archiving. We expect that researchers and social historians will make much of the material in the coming years, but we hope, above all, that it gives to the community of Ballymun a renewed sense of its own history: the continuities of struggle, hope and joy that create the present moment.”

Yet this covers only a fraction of the total generated by community producers and CTV channels. Much of it features people seldom seen on the media; and highlights issues that seldom see the light of day. The emphasis is on how communities, including communities of interest, view themselves, an approach never adopted by mainstream media on the few occasions when they visit this level.

The IFI communication continued:

“Community broadcasters need to be encouraged to think about the afterlife and safe preservation of the material they create, and archives need to be more aware of the historic richness and social insight to be found in semi-professional and amateur works. The IFI was very fortunate on this project to work with material that had been well cared for over the course of 40 years, but in general the longer the gap between broadcast and preservation, the greater the risk is that valuable work will be lost. It’s the work of all of us to bridge that gap.”

One community broadcaster, CCTv, has been concerned about how to preserve its content and that of the community producers. Frameworks Films has submitted applications, with credible partners, four times for support under the Sound and Vision Archive scheme, but has so far been unsuccessful.

⁴³ Email from Niall Anderson. IFI Archive Division, June 1st 2023

Content relevance and quality

The individual CCTV and DCTV reports analyse in detail the results of an online survey of members of each of these channels, covering issues of both relevance and quality.

Here the results from both channels are *aggregated*, to obtain a wider overall picture of the sector.

The survey focused on a targeted list of active members (many of whom were also interviewed), and received 49 responses between the two channels, 24 from DCTV and 25 from CCTV. These respondents would all be very familiar with their respective CTV channel's output and most would also have engaged in the process side, and can offer insights into the types of programmes considered relevant.

Relevance of CTV Content

The Survey posed the question, concerning the relevance of content, as follows:

“CCTV broadcasts programmes on a variety of themes, grouped below under a number of headings. To what extent is each of these relevant and interesting to your organisation and/or your community?”

The table below ranks them in order of relevance.⁴⁴

Table 1: Relevance of CTV Content Themes (N=49)

Programme Theme	Relevance (max = 100%)
Community development activities & projects	85%
Music, arts and culture	84%
History and heritage	84%
Media literacy	75%
Migration and new communities	72%
Older people	69%
Environment and climate change	68%
Traveller community	60%
Children and young people	59%
Disability and able-bodied	59%
Alternative global news	53%
News from communities around the world	52%
Local sports	49%

It should be noted that the question was posed in terms of relevance to “your organisation and/or your community,” and not relevance to the wider target groups.

Community development, music, arts, culture, history and heritage score the highest for relevance. At the other end, the least relevant – though still about 50% or higher are local sport, news from around the world.

In between are a spread of themes, focusing on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and topical issues.

Quality of CTV Content

For community television, the *quality* of media outputs is a complex issue, given the strong emphasis, highlighted above, on the *production process*, as well as on the output itself. Thus the quality of the process of production—to which those who simply view the output would have only limited access—is extremely important and must be assessed on criteria quite distinct from those used for assessing content.

⁴⁴ The four responses were: *Very relevant; Somewhat relevant; Slightly relevant; Not relevant*. A score of 100% would indicate that all respondents regarded the theme as *Very Relevant*; and a score of 0% would indicate that all respondent regarded it as *Not Relevant*.

As noted, most of those targeted for this survey were involved in, or had knowledge of, the production of CTV outputs, and hence can reasonably be expected to have informed opinions on different dimensions of quality, including evidence from the output itself, regarding whether the production process was participatory and empowering.

The question posed reflected this complexity. Members were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with a set of statements.⁴⁵ The responses are presented in descending order.

Table 2: CTV Members' views on key features (N=49)

Statement	Level of Agreement Max = 100%
"CTV should also be about fun and experimentation."	84%
"Community participation at all stages is central to community television"	82%
"The process of making community TV programmes is as important as the final product"	81%
"CTV covers topics that other media somewhat neglect "	79%
"CTV brings a unique approach to its programme making and its scheduling."	75%
"Not all DCTV programmes are made by television professionals, and our appreciation of them is different."	66%
"CTV disseminates programmes that are of interest to me"	62%
"CTV programmes in general have good production values"	57%
"The overall quality of DCTV broadcasting is high"	51%

It is interesting that the strongest belief expressed is that CTV should be about fun and experimentation; and that this is followed by the centrality of community participation, and by the process of production. Then comes the fact that CTV covers neglected topics, and takes a unique approach

to programmes.

All these emphasise the unique characteristics of community television, and its participatory nature.

Three of four statements on which there is less agreement concern the level of professionalism, production values and overall quality of broadcasting—all of which would be of central concern to mainstream media.

While the broadcast quality of CTV content may vary more than that of mainstream media, their value in forming the basis of an extensive audio-visual archive of community and development in Ireland is indisputable—and is in some ways enhanced by the fact that the content is not so professional in nature. As noted, many programmes feature people and raise issues seldom seen on the media, bringing a unique focus to bear on the local level.

⁴⁵ The options were: *Strongly agree*; *Agree Somewhat*; *Neutral*; *Disagree somewhat*; or *Strongly Disagree*. A score of 100% means that all respondents strongly agree with the statement; and a score of zero would mean that all strongly disagree.

7. Challenges of Financial Sustainability

It is clear from this research that CTV in Ireland has faced, and continues to face, ongoing struggles in achieving financial sustainability, and that this has constrained the sector's development in directions seen in many other European countries and elsewhere.

It should also be noted that certain avenues of income generation, for instance attracting advertising indiscriminately, can run counter to the sector's goals and objectives, both because it does not seek to maximise audiences but rather to serve certain constituencies, and because corporate advertising, for instance, can be seen as advancing consumerism and limiting true agency and empowerment.

Some obstacles facing CTV, that go beyond just financial, can also be circular in nature and self-reinforcing, for instance, in relation to their currently inaccessible position on Virgin Media's EPG. If CCTV and DCTV lack the resources to produce and source, and hence broadcast, a sufficient variety of new content (including some imported from outside), and have to resort to numerous repeats, then Virgin Media is less likely to move them to a more prominent position. But being more prominent on the EPG might allow these channels to generate the income needed, including from socially responsible advertising and paid public announcements, to produce more programmes complete with quality continuity announcements between programmes. Interrupting such negative cycles usually requires some specific action.

Despite all the challenges, the sector has managed to deliver demonstrable social benefits; the channels have achieved organisational sustainability, transparency and accountability to a reasonable degree; and a minimum level of content distribution to its audience has been maintained. Yet all three results could be greatly improved in the presence of an adequate model of financial sustainability.

In the absence of specific financial support from a public source, for core funding including basic staff, the licence holders have explored and exploited whatever means were available to build a sustainable model.

P5TV

P5TV in Navan was the smallest of the three channels in terms of the population covered.

It was established in 1991, and wholly a volunteer-run project, with even the equipment and studio relying on financial support from founders and small local donations. P5TV, as noted, was broadcasting initially by Ministerial Order in 1992, and was relaunched in 2006 after it received its licence (though it had been obliged to shut down its operations for about a year during the licence application process, which nearly caused the core group to disband).⁴⁶

A challenge was also to migrate to an organisational structure, designed initially to enable a group of local hobbyists to pursue their dream, to one that involved the community more widely and could be recognised by the BAI under the legislation. It had the support of local county councillors who also contributed to programmes, and it continued throughout to rely almost exclusively on the commitment, efforts and often funds of the founders and a team of as many as 30 active volunteers. At one point, P5TV was also broadcasting local events and sports live from a mobile unit, via a mast

⁴⁶ For a deeper analysis of P5TV see Gillan, M. *Class, Voice, State*. PhD Thesis. NUI Maynooth. Pages 175-176 See https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/2293/1/m_gillan_thesis.pdf

they had erected to receive the signal. While they succeeded in attracting some Sound and Vision funds, this was never seen as, and never did become, a major financial contributor, and the mainstay of their work remained local content produced by volunteers.

Nevertheless, P5TV's enthusiast local base sustained the community channel for over twenty years and, right up to the end, in April 2015, it continued to produce at least two new programmes a week. It was forced to close, however, when the cable operator, which is obliged only to carry the signal, moved fully from analogue to digital transmission, and P5TV was unable to deliver programmes onto the network in the appropriate digital form. Broadcasting since 1992, and licenced since 2006, it thus finally shut its doors due to an inability to pay the relatively modest cost for a transition to a new technical format for the play-out, an illustration of how fragile the stations are and how precarious is their sustainability in the absence of specific support.

CCTv and DCTV had both, from the start, prioritised the development of a financially sustainable model. Ambitions were high early on. DCTV had determined, based on international research completed in 2002, that a fully functional community channel, with its own studio, producing up to eight hours per day of original content and with a full training facility, would cost about €525,000 annually. This was the equivalent at the time of a 1.58% increase in the TV licence fee; or €1.45 per Dublin household; or a 1.1% increase in the NTL cable subscription. (This compared to over €300 million for RTÉ at the time.)

While both channels actively sought and secured Sound and Vision funding as community producers, each took a different approach to sustainability (see individual CCTv and DCTV reports), based on their circumstances and the wider environment.

DCTV

DCTV, in its first phase between 2008 to 2013, decided to focus on generating a flow of income for the channel and to employ staff to engage in production; these staff could in turn work with volunteers to together undertake the core tasks of running a channel, producing programmes, and an organisation. An early set back came when that DCTV failed to secure a community social enterprise or social employment scheme, largely because the schemes were suspended after the financial crash of 2008. However, this timing proved to be fortuitous from the point of view of engaging skilled volunteers, especially in production activities.

Based on initial success with the Sound and Vision scheme and some grants, DCTV negotiated significant loans from a social enterprise bank, and a large overdraft facility. This enabled it to purchase equipment and build studios, the second of which was small in scale and designed for ease of use, located in the city's cultural quarter. Income came primarily from DCTV's own Sound and Vision productions; selling studio, equipment and staff-time to independent community producers who had received Sound and Vision grants; and modest grants and paid projects.

Throughout the period, efforts were made to diversify funding sources and increase income, and these met with some success. EU project-based funding was secured, and occasional grants from Dublin City Council and its Community Forum (on which DCTV sat), and from others such as trades unions for small productions, were very welcome and helped the channel to focus on its main goals. Liaising with educational institutions, it developed an accredited training capacity, and began to deliver training. Negotiating these proved time-consuming, however, and their delivery was also

proving to be a distraction from activities closer to the ethos of the station. All of these sources were short-term, and could only occasionally be revisited.

Between 2008 and 2013, DCTV had an average income of almost €250,000, 77% of which, after external costs, came from productions, the vast majority from the Sound and Vision scheme. The fragility of this funding model was brought home to DCTV in no uncertain terms in late 2013, when its yield from the Sound and Vision scheme dried up over consecutive Rounds. DCTV was forced into receivership. The figures suggest that a relatively modest annual sum, that could cover core costs, might have averted the receivership and enabled DCTV to continue operating.

DCTV had, over a period of over five years, built an impressive model in terms of achieving most of its goals: it was providing low-cost or free training to dozens of members; it was enabling the participation of hundreds of people in media planning and production; and it had produced and broadcast thousands of hours of content, much of it innovative.

It took almost a decade for DCTV to fully repay debts, and, remarkably, it managed to maintain a minimum service for most of that time based on volunteer support; and it has continued to support community producers in obtaining Sound and Vision scheme funding.

DCTV is now preparing for a relaunch and a new phase of development. The recent project, funded by Sound and Vision's Social Benefit Round, will enable DCTV to build a closer relationship with a number of community organisations, and enhance their capacities around production and dissemination. However, the underlying structural issues around sustainability have not been resolved, and will have to be confronted again soon.

CCTv

CCTv took a different, less risky but still hazardous, approach.

At the start, it sought and secured Sound and Vision funding to produce a few programmes, and an early goal was to establish a studio in which a reasonable volume of programmes could be made. It negotiated with Cork City Council for some time, and did receive some modest support, for instance for transmission. But an appropriate location for a studio, with affordable rent, and the equipment needed, were not secured. The Board decided that the idea of developing a studio, although remaining a long-term goal, would be set aside for the moment.

It set about building its broadcasting capacities, supporting community producers in seeking funding from the Sound and Vision scheme and, when opportunities arose, engaging in its own productions.

The model that emerged, and has continued until now, is almost entirely volunteer-based. CCTv relies heavily on a core group of volunteers, most present from the beginning and some, such as the principals of Frameworks Films, involved in dozens of community-led productions. These volunteers deliver the full range of tasks needed to run CCTv: programming and play-out to Virgin Media cable signal, complying with the regulator's requirements, administering a membership-based registered company and annual audits, and ensuring transparent and participative governance. They also, supplemented recently with a small payment, support a range of community producers in developing ideas and securing support from the Sound and Vision scheme.

Other factors have enabled it, despite any reliable source of funding, to keep going.

CCTv has built up positive relations with Cork City Council and several educational institutions in the city and county. Outcomes include several co-productions, and coverage of elections, social and cultural events, including live broadcasting.

Occasional grants have been vital to the survival of CCTv and to its continuing technical capacity to deliver a signal and improve its Web presence. The BAI, often through the CTA, has also offered some support, in terms of building capacity, enhancing technical capabilities, and promoting community television through the CTV Festival.

Community producers in Cork and sometimes further away have, with CCTv support, secured over €2 million from the Sound and Vision scheme over the years, producing a wide diversity of original and high-quality programmes. Since launch, CCTv and community producers have enabled about 100 organisations, mostly community-based, to develop ideas for, and participate in production and in dissemination, including training activities and media literacy capacity building.

Yet this model, in the long-term, is not sustainable. It has worked up to now thanks to a fortuitous level of determination and dedication of volunteers. To reliably sustain even the current, minimal, level of activity of this model, CCTv would require an office, basic staff, and sufficient funding to enable it to improve and replace its equipment. It is currently overly dependent on volunteers and on occasional grants that often require significant effort to secure.

The evidence suggests that CCTv is delivering a unique and invaluable service to community organisations, and that the latter find engaging with CCTv to be beneficial and empowering. However, a lot more could be achieved.

A key shortcoming is that CCTv, due to its lack of staff and resources, is unable to follow-up and sustain the relationships it, and some key community producers, have established, through partnering in programme production and dissemination. Developing and sustaining a relationship between CCTv and these community organisations could very significantly multiply the social benefits being generated.

CCTv is in the process of transforming into *Cork Community Media Hub*. Alongside broadcasting, the Hub aims to add additional activities: offering training and support to community organisations; co-producing programmes with these communities; and creating a space where community media activists can work together. CCTv and its members believe that these will reinforce each other, encourage new generations of volunteers, and attract funding to the sector. The current Social Benefit Sound and Vision Scheme project will build more sustained relations with community organisations; and a parallel project aims to expand the volunteer base.

The Hub will also broaden the focus beyond television, to a wider understanding of community media in the current media context. It will move into the media spaces that people of all ages and in all communities are beginning to occupy, going beyond VOD and streaming to include social media skills. The experience of CCTv and its community producers in the area of media literacy, opened out to digital media literacy, is a positive asset in moving in this direction.

8. Summary and Conclusions

The conclusions are outlined as responses to four questions. Since it is a summary, it also repeats some of the content above.

What is Community Television and where is it going?

One issue stood out from many of the interviews undertaken for this research.

Those involved in community television in Ireland believe it is vital that all stakeholders recognise it, first and foremost, as contributing to community development and empowerment. This is the founding impetus behind it, and the reason it has commanded such a high level of volunteer support since its foundation; and this, for much of its history, is all that keeps it motivated and underpins its survival. Television and multi-media are deployed as the means to achieve this: the medium of television, and increasingly digital media, are its primary tools.

CTV is thus a sub-sector of community development; and simultaneously a sub-sector of media. But regarding the latter, its relationship is mainly *instrumental*, a means to achieve a broader goal.

Ironically, the great achievement of community television, after a decade lobbying - to be recognised in the Broadcasting Act 2001 - had an unexpected downside: Securing a license to broadcast at the same time anchored CTV too firmly in the media sector, instead of where it was coming from, in the community development sector.

Thus, on first encountering community television, most people, understandably, perceive it as essentially a sub-sector of media, albeit one characterised by its focus on local or community level production. This fundamental misunderstanding of the sector has led over the years to mismatches between the regulation and support structures that have sought to govern and support community television, and the characteristics and needs of the sector itself.

This may be partly behind the DRCD's reluctance to approve CTV service providers in its CSP, even though they qualify under the relevant criteria. Similarly, when the BAI (now CnM) were developing its schemes for the Broadcasting Fund, CTV channels believe that it gave insufficient consideration to the specific characteristics of CTV as focused primarily on *community development* and not just on producing *media outputs* i.e. that the process of production and the dynamics of actors within the sector can be more important, and generate as much or more benefits for the target group, than the outputs themselves. In recent years, the Social Benefit Sound and Vision Round, as well as other aspects, have begun to address this issue.

Community development principles are inscribed in not just the content produced, but in its open and democratic structures, and in its participative planning, production and dissemination processes. This is not to say that community television does not overlap in some of its functions with mainstream media. As a recent BAI policy advisory report put it:⁴⁷

“As media organisations they offer information, entertainment, education and other relevant content to their communities. **But as part of the community infrastructure** they both engage their communities directly in the process of production and dissemination, and

⁴⁷ *Community Media Policy and Regulation for the Future* (2002) published by BAI
<https://www.bai.ie/en/download/136026/v>

amplify and reinforce the efforts of a huge range of other community and voluntary organisations.” [Emphasis in original.]

This fundamental goal also influences other features of the sector.

First, the sector has engaged significantly in media literacy actions, including digital media literacy, as an obvious extension of media into community development. CTA is a member of Media Literacy Ireland. Second, there is an affinity to other media forms, such as community radio (the national associations, CRAOL for community radio and CTA for community television collaborate in areas such as advocacy) that can have similarly empowering impacts. Third, they seek out new media forms to assess whether they are capable of contributing to the wider goals of community development, such as certain types of social media.

The BAI recognises in its Community Media Policy of 2021 that community media seeks to empower and develop their communities. But they take a further important step: They develop a single community media policy where previously they were separate for radio and television, and they expand the range of activities across the full range of media tools, educational activities and dissemination platforms:

“...community media organisations are operating along a continuum, from a small volunteer-run community radio station up to a multi-purpose community media hub offering a multiplicity of media production tools, education facilities and disseminating content across several platforms.” (page 6)

The sector itself is also moving in the same direction. CCTV, for instance, is transforming itself into the Cork Community Media Hub, in which a wider range of media-related activities can be combined and which will offer a space for CBOs, individuals and community producers of all kinds to engage.

The Future of Media Commission (FOMC) has also endorsed and recognised the value of community media, not just for enhancing media diversity (which it does) but specifically for its community level impact. In recommending a Community Media Scheme, it adds the following:

“The Commission believes that this could include for example, the establishment of community media hubs around Ireland, which would provide pooled media resources in community areas, training or other targeted initiatives.” (page 155)

This reports concludes the following concerning a definition, characteristics and direction of community television in Ireland:

1. It is important that all stakeholders recognise the CTV sector as, first of all, a sub-sector of community empowerment and development, that has emerged from a worldwide movement and that sees video, multi-media and television as tools to achieve these goals.
2. As such, it engages in media training, digital literacy enhancement, content co-productions with communities and individuals, facilitates and supports the emergence of community producers; and enables wider dissemination of the output of the entire sector through broadcasting, live-streaming, VODs and other means.
3. CTV service providers have a natural affinity with other community media and, in the context of the convergence and digitalisation of all media, are moving towards a concept of combined Community Media Hubs, in which people and community organisations, and statutory

organisations, can have a physical and virtual space to learn, experiment, exchange and produce output across all forms of media.

The future of CTV is most likely to be secured when viewed as CTV service providers offering a range of media-related learning and production activities. This form is likely to maximise the potential for social benefit that can be generated for their members and target groups.

Have models of CTV Service Providers emerged that generate benefits?

The Community Media Social Benefit Framework, funded by the BAI, was designed in part to ensure that community media, including CTV, can clearly distinguish and measure the value it brings to communities, value that is distinct from, though partly overlapping, with that of public service media.

Two distinct models emerged in community television in Ireland so far.

DCTV's Multi-Functional Model

The first model was DCTV in its first phase, between 2008 and 2013. Over a short few years, DCTV grew to develop a full range of services for many communities in Dublin. Experimenting first with a large, somewhat inaccessible studio, where it produced high-quality studio programmes, it then built its accessible Shopfront Studio in the Temple Bar area, visible to passers-by, with user-friendly production and editing equipment. Here, it provided basic training at low or no cost to dozens of people, and in parallel developed what is called the Open Formats production model. This involved the development, initially for a first programmes series, of a modular set of technical and visual resources and an instruction manual, all of which could be refined and reused by multiple groups and organisations.

This enabled the production of a very large volume of content in a short space of time, in studio and outside, by different groups, in different thematic formats. The studio was a vibrant and inviting space, constantly busy and occupied. Content was produced by volunteer members, but had the support and training of three of the five DCTV staff members. Such was the level of interest from individuals and community organisations that demand could never be satisfied, and staff were often overstretched in other areas of their work.

Throughout the period, membership grew, to over 250. DCTV developed positive relations with Dublin City Council, were outreaching to community organisations, and supporting community producers to seek funding from the Sound and Vision scheme. Administratively, the structure as a cooperative was transparent, democratic and relatively efficient, and all legal requirements from the BCI and others were being met. The signal was being played out to Virgin Media 24 hours a day, and the station's own streaming and on demand services were developing.

The precarious financial sustainability of the model, reinforced by excessive demands on staff, led by late 2013 to its demise, and almost to the closure of DCTV itself.

Although low rental agreements had been secured for the offices and studios, large loans for equipment and studios required servicing (from a socially oriented bank); and an overdraft was often used for current funding. Grants were obtained from local authorities, some projects won from European programmes, and small contracts were completed for training institutions and others. But a large amount of DCTV income derived from payments under the Sound and Vision Scheme. These included grants for DCTV's own productions, using its own studio and equipment, for which fees

could be charged at cost, and staff, and which very often included a training element for members. DCTV was also able to secure some income by renting its equipment and staff to other community producers, for them to make their own Sound and Vision programmes.

Some of those involved acknowledge that, in retrospect, it was precarious from the beginning. But external income was growing, for instance, from European Union programmes. In the end, the failure of DCTV to gain funding from successive rounds of Sound and Vision funding in 2013 proved too much, and it was forced into receivership with significant debts. Despite the great success of this model in terms of outputs, it proved in the end to be unsustainable.

It is to their credit, and again underlining the commitment of volunteers, over the last decade all debts have since been discharged, a basic service has been maintained, while community producers were still supported. DCTV is now regrouping for a new phase of development.

What were the benefits generated during this period?

Details are provided in the DCTV Report, using the Social Benefits Framework. And the CTV Stories⁴⁸ provide the qualitative detail using examples of content. Summarising the results:

- Through the huge numbers of volunteer members trained, especially for media production, charging little or no fees, and then supporting the production process, DCTV can reasonably claim to have built capacities and self-confidence on a significant scale, including many people from disadvantaged backgrounds and working with community development organisations.
- These volunteers, as well as DCTV staff themselves sometimes co-producing with community organisations, generated a large volume and diversity of content, covering social, economic and cultural themes. These raised awareness directly among participants, and through broadcasting and Web-based access, DCTV enhanced greatly the diversity of content available.
- Other community producers were supported, sometimes significantly, to apply for Sound and Vision funding, including existing ones such as Ballymun Communications and NEAR TV, new ones emerging, and more professional producers with a community orientation. These in turn generated similar benefits among their target groups, clients and communities.

These were the main benefits, though others in the Social Benefit Framework are identified.

Weaknesses, in terms of areas in which the potential for benefits were not being realised, included:

- An inability to expand audience size among the target, even where access was available through the cable network, partly due to the strong emphasis on production and training.
- Insufficient resources to enable DCTV to maintain, over a sustained period, relationships with CBOs. Building new relationships would also require an outreach capacity, working with them to recognise and realise the benefits of CTV. The Storefront Studio was hugely successful, but productions tended to emphasise youth cultures and themes.
- Insufficient resources and efforts to establish positive and mutually beneficial relations with local governance structures in all four local authorities, and to build relations with statutory education bodies such as the then VECs.

Key factors behind the financial failure of the model were clear:

⁴⁸ These are contained in an Annex in each of the two CTV reviews associated with this work.

- The absence of core funding meant that much of the limited income available (always at least partially earmarked for specific activities) was diverted to cover administration, broadcasting costs and staff time. Finances and staff were thus constantly under pressure.
- The Sound and Vision Scheme was not designed to cover costs associated with broadcasting and running a station, and DCTV's mixture of own productions and services sold to other community producers—all funded 90% by the Scheme—was precarious and, in the long term, unsustainable.
- Other hoped for sources of income, from grants programmes and sales, yielded less than anticipated, though at the time of the crisis these were growing.
- While the credit received, especially from the socially oriented bank, enabled the launch of the multi-functional model, repayment of these loans was never on a secure basis.

Despite all this, DCTV proved during this period that a CTV service provider in Ireland could, with relatively modest funding, provide a wide range of media services, mobilise a huge number of volunteers to gain media experience and enhance media literacy, and support many community producers to secure funding and provide benefits to their communities.

CCTV's Broadcast-driven, community facilitation, model

Not by choice, but by necessity, CCTV's Board and members decided early on to concentrate their efforts on offering a reliable broadcasting service, by cable and other means; and on encouraging and supporting existing and new community producers to secure Sound and Vision Scheme and other sources of funding, and to produce new content. Plans to build and equip a studio and to build a space for CTV to create content and interact as a sector were put on hold. Alongside this, CCTV developed relationships with local authorities, educational institutions and statutory service providers, seeking partnerships to access resources and to develop mutually beneficial projects and actions, including some co-productions.

Since its launch in 2009, CCTV has delivered its content reliably to the Virgin Media cable network, including the scheduling of programmes, and the purchase and maintenance of hardware and software needed. In recent years, it has also developed a streaming service, and has successfully piloted its VOD system.

This model has seen CCTV encouraging, supporting and facilitating community producers to secure funding for and them to broadcast a large volume of original programmes, most of them co-produced with community development organisations. About 100 mostly CBOs, but also some statutory organisations and institutions, have engaged extensively with these productions. Community screenings and public launches have been organised, attracting large audiences and often stimulating discussions of the issues raised.

A key difference in Cork, as compared to Dublin, was that much of the energy and commitment to establishing CCTV came from an existing successful community video and film producer, Frameworks Films. The credibility and contacts build up by Frameworks could readily transfer to CCTV; and these relationships could be strengthened by CCTV's capacity to broadcast content. Thus, CCTV could work hand in hand with Frameworks Films to broadcast governance activities such as several election counts; public celebrations including the Saint Patrick's Day festival, and local sports matches. The symbiotic relationship works greatly to the advantage of CCTV, in terms of building contacts and

outreach, securing content for broadcasting, and taking responsibility, as volunteers, for the mundane activities of annual company returns and audits and other administrative tasks.

Yet such a relationship also points to the weakness in the financial sustainability of the model. It demands enormous unpaid voluntary time, not just from the key people in Framework Films, but from a small group of additional volunteers (a couple of whom had worked with Chorus, the previous owner of the cable system) who have maintained their commitment from the beginning.

Thus, even this model of CTV, stripped back almost to the minimum needed to fulfil the license obligations and facilitate with community producers, is not in the long-term sustainable, relying as it does on the ongoing commitment and availability of a small group of volunteers.

The direct and indirect benefits it has generated are also considerable.

Details are, again, in the individual CCTv report, and in the CCTv Stories, but they can be summarised as follows:

- Through co-producing or participating in the planning, production and distribution of television productions, CCTv has enabled over 100 mainly CBOs to work with community producers, raising awareness, and developing information and learning resources for internal and external use;
- Many of these co-productions have involved a significant training component for the co-producing community organisation, specifically for disadvantaged individuals and groups, developing vocational and life-skills;
- CCTv has enabled the dissemination, through sustained cable access, live-streaming and now VOD, and through facilitating community showings and screenings, a huge diversity of new and some innovative television content, enhancing media content diversity.

The main area in which CCTv could extend the impact of this model are:

- Expanding access of its content, throughout Cork County and to those without broadband;
- Sustaining a relationship after initial interaction with the CBOs, enabling them to develop their CTV activity further;
- Reinforcing further its positive relations, co-productions and collaborative activities with local governance structures, in City and County; and with the statutory educational authorities such as the ETB and third level institutions.

Key factors relevant to the long-term sustainability of this broadcast-focused model are:

- The absence of a source to fund core activities and resources, including administration, programmes and play-out, and hence the total long-term reliance on motivating and retaining volunteers with the necessary skills, time and commitment.
- Limited possibilities within the Sound and Vision Scheme, and other supports, for the channel itself to fund the work they devote to facilitating other community producers and building CBO media capacities.

Is the Legislative and Regulatory framework supportive?

Successive legislation in the Broadcasting Acts in 2001 and 2009, the Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003, and schemes and policies established by the BCI and then the BAI, have led to the legal

recognition of community television in Ireland, and have benefited the sector in some important ways. A new set of possibilities has emerged recently, with the passing of the Online Safety and Media Regulation (OSMR) Act 2002, and the FOMC Report and Implementation Strategy being overseen by the DTCSGSM.

These are examined in some detail in a separate report produced as part of this research, which is summarised in Annex 3. Here the focus is on how well these have addressed the needs of the sector, taking into consideration its key characteristics as outlined in this report. The main existing schemes are considered first, followed by a review of some proposed schemes.

The Broadcasting Fund

The Broadcasting Fund (soon to be replaced by the Media Fund) created the basis for successive Sound & Vision Schemes. Community radio and television have been included from the beginning. The total amount approved for productions broadcast by CTV channels is just under €5.5 million, amounting to approximately €370,000 annually.

Although representing a very small proportion of the overall Sound and Vision Scheme, which awards about €14 million annually, this enabled the production of a significant volume of original, high-quality content, probably none of which would have been possible in the scheme's absence. It has been hugely significant for some community producers, and contributed to the overall volume of production in the sector. At the same time, much of the most innovative and impactful productions were produced outside of the scheme, with funding and partnerships from other community support sources, or produced by staff and volunteer members.

Furthermore, several of those centrally involved in CTV argued convincingly that had this funding gone directly to the licensed channels, instead of solely to producing content, it could have by now built a thriving community television sector. It is also likely that the structure of the Sound and Vision scheme did not encourage the right kind of behaviour within the sector, for instance by maximising synergies between community producers and the licensed service providers and motivating CBOs to collaborate in long-term relationships with the channels.

From the beginning, the CTV sector expressed concerns about the scheme. Key among them is that costs associated with actually broadcasting to cable and associated scheduling, reporting and so forth, as well as of managing a channel and sustaining relations with the community, are ineligible. The full amount must go towards production costs. The sector has always argued that this could be addressed legally, given that a specific objective of the broadcast funding scheme is to⁴⁹ “develop local and community broadcasting;” and it further states – uniquely - that the BAI in preparing the scheme “may have regard to the developmental needs of community broadcaster.”⁵⁰

Even allowing that only production costs are eligible, this research confirms that the licensed CTV channels, as co-producers with CBOs, must invariably spend a considerable amount of extra time and resources to enable these organisations, and often their client or target groups, to participate fully in the production process. Such additional costs have been largely disallowed, although in more recent years some modest elements of training, outreach and development have been permitted.

There were other concerns.

⁴⁹ 2003 Act Section 3 (1) (f); 2009 Act Section 155 (1) (f).

⁵⁰ 2009 Act Section 154 (5)

CTV had also argued that the legislation should allow funding for community news and current affairs productions. The rationale was that, unlike public service and commercial broadcasters, community broadcasters have no mandatory licence obligation to produce news or current affairs, and that such content would thus certainly, for community media, have been additional. As a media genre, community affairs would be vital to building a committed audience, as well as engaging directly with the community members.

Furthermore, the scheme failed to acknowledge in practice that community-based applicants were going through a learning process, and were not professionals at applying for media grants (unlike the other media sectors). The rejection of repeated (revised) submissions to successive Rounds (despite being encouraged to reapply), with little or no guidance from the BAI, led to disillusionment in the scheme and in CTV itself. A tailored approach, with two or three stages designed to improve the application would, the sector argued, be more appropriate.

The BAI was listening to and, to a degree, responding to these criticisms.

The most significant change was introduced recently with the creation of ‘ring-fenced’ or thematic rounds. Up until then community television was competing directly with, and subject to the same criteria as, commercial and public service television, despite their very different structure, objectives, process of production and access to resources. In 2022, Round 48 targeted community media, entitled the Social Benefit round, and in March 2023 DCTV and CCTv received grants in the region of €75,000 each.

This is a major development, and a sign, welcomed by the sector, that the BAI recognises the unique objectives of the sector. It may also begin the process of developing eligibility criteria for costs that can be tailored to the reality of the sector. Nevertheless, there is additional work to be done, the sector feels, before the legislation and the associated schemes fully take into account the specific characteristics and needs of the sector. Furthermore, the proportion of overall funding developed through the Social Benefits Rounds is very low, and should be increased, the sector believes.

One other point of concern relates specifically to Section 77 (8) of the 2009 Act. The CTV sector had hoped that cable operators might be obliged to provide technical assistance and equipment to ensure a quality signal was broadcast, and not just to carry the signal; and also (under Section 74) to offer them a better position on the EPG. As streaming services and on-demand platforms rise in prominence, the issue of appropriate regulation of channel visibility and EPGs is coming under scrutiny, offering opportunities to re-examine the relevance for the sector.

It is noted that the OSMR Act 2022 contains provisions for the development of Codes and Rules⁵¹ relating to the prominence and findability of “public service content.” Community television output may well come under this designation and therefore could be considered in the practical application of Codes and Rules. This could result in CTV content becoming more easily accessible to Irish audiences, across a wider range of platforms.

The Community Broadcasting Support Scheme

The CBSS specifically targets the community media sector, and CTV can apply for support. However, the eligibility criteria mean that, while useful, the grants cover mainly governance, capacity building and research, and in no way address the key sustainability issues of the sector. The amount allocated

⁵¹ Section 128 B (5) of the OSMR Act 2022

is small, and the take up in the sector has been falling. Additional grants are also available to the CTA from the SLD scheme but, again, while they support networking and reinforce the sectoral level, they are not designed to alleviate the core financial constraints.

Indeed, the sector argued that CBSS's title as a 'support' scheme was a misnomer and could potentially mislead policy-makers and politicians into believing that a dedicated broad sectoral support was already in existence: it might more accurately have been called a 'review and research' scheme.

A complete review of the scheme is possible, as part of wider establishment of a Community Media Fund, a recommendation of the FOMC.

Policy Development

The BAI has supported a shift in community media policy that sees community television as part of a continuum of different types of media that all focus on community empowerment, with several distinct but mutually supportive strands. In the context of digital convergence, platform neutrality, and the rise of social media, the CTV has welcomed this direction.

The CTV sector also welcomes the development of the community media Social Benefit Framework, which was supported by the BAI. This allows the sector to identify the type of developmental and empowering benefits the sector brings to its target communities, and hence to differentiate community media from its mainstream (including local commercial) counterparts.

What is the potential for future legislative, regulatory and policy changes?

The media landscape is in flux, and legislative, regulatory and policy responses are desperately trying to catch up. Some of the issues above may be less important in future to the sector, while others could rise in prominence.

A number of processes already in train are highly significant to the future of the CTV sector.

The FOMC Implementation Strategy and the OSMR Act 2022, under which CnaM has been created, are the most significant, and have huge potential, if appropriately designed and implemented, to contribute to a sustainable basis for the CTV sector. Relevant elements are summarised in Annex 3.

The DRCD's Community Support Programme, implemented by Pobal, has become a central support to many stations in the community radio sector. CCTv has applied for support under this scheme, and believes that it meets the criteria. DCTV is also considering applying. Although indications are that the CSP may be closed to new applicants, there is no doubt that the CTV sector could benefit from it and has the capacity to deliver on the CSP goals.

9. Recommendations

Objectives and Goal of Recommendations

Overall, these recommendations are designed to ensure that the unique characteristics of the CTV sector, and its potential to generate social benefits for communities, are appropriately taken into consideration by the legislative, regulatory and public support environment into the future.

At the outset, this demands a recognition by all stakeholders that community media in general, and CTV and associated activities specifically, find their roots in, and comprise part of the community empowerment and development sector. At the same time, through the choice of the means, tools and instruments by which they seek to achieve their goals, they are part of the media sector.

This puts an obligation on the CTV sector to assess its achievements on these standards, to ensure that they live up to the responsibilities, and to orient their structures and actions accordingly.

The overall objective of these recommendations is to *maximise the potential of CTV to generate social benefits by empowering, and giving agency to, communities in their media environment.*

What began as community television two decades ago is evolving into a digitally convergent, platform neutral set of media-related services to the community. CTV seeks to enable communities to engage with, often contentious, media dynamics, to take agency, and to deploy these tools effectively to achieve their goals.

The goals of these recommendations are the following:

1. *Enhance understanding of CTV:* Encourage and enable a better understanding of the sector among all stakeholders, its defining characteristics and the potential for benefits.
2. *Support secure and sustainable funding:* Provide support for multi-annual core funding for the sector, with appropriate conditions, to cover the costs of broadcasting (including by digital means), and associated administration and management activities.
3. *Secure access to platforms and prominence:* Using the potential in the OSMR on public service content, ensure that CTV content has high prominence in the key content platforms.
4. *Tailor supports to needs:* Ensure that the various schemes and supports, offered by government departments and CnaM, tailor the individual supports, from design and on to implementation, to the needs of the CTV sector.
5. *Coordinate and integrate the supports:* Coordinate the available supports for the CTV sector, from both community development and media sides, to minimise overlap and ensure mutually reinforcing impact.
6. *Build CTV service providers' outreach capacity function:* Secure the means for CTV service providers to interact and collaborate with the CBOs and communities, local governance structures and statutory service providers, as future growth and sustainability depends on this.
7. *Stem the loss of content and build an archive:* Ensure that the content generated in the CTV sector is not lost, and is available for ongoing use and future generations, offering unique and valuable insights into communities.

Recommendations to Stakeholders

A number of uncertainties are associated with upcoming legislative and regulatory developments , for instance regarding how the Sound and Vision scheme, and schemes emerging from the FOMC recommendations and those in the OSMR, will relate to each other and be consolidated into a coherent set of media supports. There are also legislative refinements on the way, and new rules and regulations still to be designed and implemented, for instance around regulating on-demand platforms including visibility and prominence. Thus the specifics of the following recommendations are less important than what they are trying to achieve as outlined above.

The following are the recommendations:

For Legislators

Media legislation, most recently the OSMR Act 2002, will most likely require amendment soon, among other reasons to take into account recommendations emerging from the FOMC.

1. **Tailor Support for CTV:** To introduce amendments to legislation that will enable the Media Fund to develop a media support scheme under which:
 - 1.1. a wider range of costs associated with being a community broadcaster and producers are eligible, contributing to core costs;
 - 1.2. community media can draw down public funding for the category of community news and current affairs (separately from the new FOMC schemes).
2. **Platform Access and Prominence:** To ensure that CTV service providers can secure a prominent position, enhancing ‘findability’ on platform providers EPGs , alongside other public service content providers, by means of the elaboration of Codes and Rules pursuant to section 128 (B) 5 of the OSMR and subject to criteria to be developed by CnaM.
3. **Technical support on Cable Operators:** To oblige cable operators to provide, as required, technical support to enable CTV broadcasters to feed in a reliable high-quality signal to their network.

For Government Departments and Coimisiún na Meán

In keeping with its bi-sectoral positioning, the CTA sector is particularly relevant to two government departments: the DTCSGSM which covers media; and the DRCD responsible for the CSP and other community-level development and enterprise support programmes. CnaM, as the regulatory and implementation agency of media support schemes, is also a key actor. Several recommendations include their joint consideration:

4. **Establish a CTV Stakeholder Working Group, develop an MoU:** DTCSGSM should convene a CTV Working Group, bringing together CnaM and DRCD at senior level and the CTV sector associations and other relevant actors, such as Pobal. This would develop and articulate an agreed understanding of the sector’s role and examine coordinated approaches to providing support, as appropriate and justified. It would acknowledge the sector’s specific contributions to community development, media literacy, and other areas. A shared understanding of and commitment to supporting the sector should be documented in an MoU between participating parties. In the context of the current Community Media Policy, it would make sense to broaden this to include community radio, in consultation with CRAOL.

An option that might emerge from this is the creation of a dedicated *Community Media Fund or Instrument*, as distinct from a collection of individual schemes, that would aggregate the various supports together, and embrace the wider sector activities such as media literacy, community training, media hub development and so forth.

5. **Enhance ongoing coordination between DTCSGSM, CnaM and the CTV sector.** In the context of the imminent development of media support schemes arising from the FOMC Recommendations and (in future) the OSMR Act, the DTCSGSM and CnM should engage more consistently and coherently with the CTV sector, through the CTA and jointly with CRAOL. The goal would be to ensure that the final version of these schemes are coherent with each other and the overall needs of the sector, targeting their potential supports in a rational way on the sector, taking into account its potential and characteristics.
6. **Offer an adequately-funded Social Benefit Scheme on an annual basis.** The Sound and Vision's Social Benefit Scheme was a major advance for the sector. In the above context of improved coordination, it needs further refinement and expanded funding, in order to enhance the sector's sustainability.

For Coimisiún na Meán and CTV Sector

7. **Establish a dedicated CTV Archive:** A national CTV archive would secure the current and future value of the large volume of CTV sector content, including by community producers, funded from the Archive Scheme under the Broadcasting Fund and in partnership with appropriate bodies such as the IFI. The process has already begun with the Ballymun Communication's Archive, with IFI and CnaM, but should be at a national scale and in coordination with similar work underway for community radio.

The Community Television Association

The CTV sector, through the CTA, is building closer relations with community media more widely, especially community radio, and already covers all of Ireland in its remit with the membership of Northern Visions Television. The CTA sector has the potential to extend its range of services to the sector:

8. **Develop an overall vision and framework for the future of the CTV sector.** CTA should develop, in close collaboration with CRAOL, an overall vision of the future of the community media sector, the direction it is to take and the various modalities of support it offers, via media, to community development and empowerment. A Framework incorporating the different modalities would then facilitate coherent interactions between the different elements in community media, but also with the potential public and other sources of support for the sector. The idea of community media hubs (see below) is a starting point for this, having been accepted in principle by both CTA and CRAOL.
9. **Build CTV sector and services at national level:** Through the CTA, the sector should design and pursue specific elaborated proposals to develop the sector nationally. These could include:
 - a) A national level CTV service (which is already being discussed within CTA and with others), that might, for instance, combine the output from sub-national ones;
 - b) A single technical platform for a streaming service from all providers;
 - c) A smartphone App to access CTV content and resources;

- d) Resources and guidebooks for CTV production, building on previous and ongoing work;
- e) A national Archive of CTV content (see above);
- f) Deeper relations and joint activities with CRAOL, which shares a common ethos.

10. **Support implementation of the Social Benefit Framework:** The CTA should seek funding to support CTV service providers in fully implementing the Social Benefit Framework methodology, to be able to demonstrate to stakeholders, internal and external, the benefits being generated.

CTV Service Providers

There are currently two CTV service providers, and more are likely to emerge as the sector gains strength.

11. **Build Relations with Key Stakeholders:** A central priority for CTV service providers, as they begin to develop a more secure base, is to reinforce existing relationships and cooperation, and to build new relations, with its key constituents: CBOs, local governance structures, and statutory service providers operating within their areas. The long-term future of the sector will depend on nurturing and sustaining mutually beneficial relations with these. This is already beginning with the new Sound and Vision project in both stations but needs to go much further.
12. **Build towards Community Media Hubs:** CTV service providers should seek to develop further, building organically, the idea of community media hubs, offering a collective space for key actors in the community media sector to exchange, educate and create. Opportunities to collaborate with other community media entities, from radio, to print and digital, and with public service and educational organisations, should be pursued and embraced. Building a collective trusted space together will grow in importance in today's evolving media environment and dynamics.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Social Benefits Framework

Definition of Social Benefit from Community Media: “Benefits to individuals or collective actors in the community that enhance their lives socially, culturally or economically, or in terms of development, empowerment and/or well-being, that otherwise would not have come about.”	
Social Benefits	Indicators of Social Benefits of each type
4. <u>Individuals</u> , especially minorities and those marginalised, are <u>growing in confidence and creativity</u> and/or <u>reinforcing a sense of belonging</u> , directly from engaging with the station.	SB1 is being achieved through... 4.1. placements from community organisations working with marginalised/disadvantaged people 4.2. station volunteers making programmes and in administration and support 4.3. training of marginalised/ disadvantaged individuals; and taking in interns from external entities 4.4. isolated or marginalised individuals viewing programmes that address their interests
5. <u>Individuals are enhancing their employment prospects</u> , through gaining skills and confidence reinforcing community identify	SB 2 is being achieved through... 5.1. media training that enhances vocational prospects 5.2. volunteer opportunities that enhance employment prospects through personal development and skills acquisition 5.3. staff experience and training that enhance their vocational prospects
6. <u>Community members are informed and aware</u> of what is happening around their community	SB3 is achieved through the use by community members of information broadcast by the station, in the form of... 6.1. regular bulletins of everyday information such as traffic, weather events etc. 6.2. specific social bulletins such as death notices, social events, etc. 6.3. transactional information services such as Job Search or Marketplace delivered free or at low-cost
5. <u>Community members are responding more effectively to issues</u> —local to global—because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information	SB 4 is achieved through the station: 5.1. producing/broadcasting content and format that addresses local to global issues, with diverse views presented in a balanced and constructive format, in studio and outside broadcasting 5.2. providing facilities and resources for volunteers to do the same, covering issues of local interest and concern 5.3. referencing local advocacy groups when reporting on news items 5.4. actively engaging in the community through projects, advocacy and interactions on issues of local interest and concern
7. <u>Collective actors (CBOs, NGOs etc.)</u> are facilitated, and	SB5 is achieved through the station... 5.4 providing airtime to local CBOs to discuss and present their work, issues and requests to the public

<p>reinforced in their capacity <u>to achieve their goals</u></p>	<p>5.5 facilitating CBOs to produce dedicated regular slots or entire programmes, including training and facilities</p> <p>5.6 actively collaborating, beyond broadcasting, with collective actors for advocacy and joint work on issues relating to social benefit</p>
<p>8. The community <u>sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced</u> through interaction and collective action</p>	<p>SB6 is achieved through the station...</p> <p>8.1. bringing diverse community groups into interactive programmes to discuss local issues, including to deal with conflicts and tensions</p> <p>8.2. helping to mobilise community members around issues of concern locally, for collective action, advocacy, etc. in an inclusive manner</p>

Annex 2: Community Television Charter

The following charter was approved by the Community Television Association, which covers all of Ireland.

CHARTER FOR COMMUNITY TELEVISION IN IRELAND

<p>Preamble</p>	<p>Recognising that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Right to Communicate goes beyond freedom of expression and embraces everyone’s right to equitable access to the means of expression, to create and disseminate their own media, and to communicate freely with others ● democratisation of media structures is central to achieving social justice, and to generating and disseminating the knowledge and political and cultural understanding essential to global sustainability; <p>Believing that Community television can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● utilise media and communication as tools for progressive social change through the liberation, empowerment and enrichment of all people and communities, but particularly those that are disadvantaged or excluded ● contribute to social and digital inclusion especially of minority voices, women, children, the poor and those marginalised from traditional mainstream television ● facilitate the emergence of individual and collective identities that are diverse, honest, open and tolerant ● Contribute to offsetting the growing concentration and centralisation of commercial media ownership ● Advance the vital efforts of people and communities in bringing democracy, participation and transparency to rapidly changing media structures and activities of media agents <p>this Charter for community television in Ireland affirms that we pursue the following common ideals, objectives and activities:</p>
	<p>Community Television:</p>
<p>What it is</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. is made in the process of the community itself, is part of that community, and relates to people’s lived lives 2. is a form of active and reflexive citizenship connecting and empowering communities and people through shared programme production, dissemination and use 3. is an expression of ‘localism’, of being located in and identifying with a community of place or of interest; while linking to global communities and recognising the essential mutual interaction between the local and the global 4. necessarily engages both with television production as an empowering process in the community, and with television viewing as a creative, enjoyable and educational process, potentially motivating critical reflection and action 5. is a growing and vibrant part of the media landscape in Ireland, reinforcing progressive media trends in politics, society and culture.
<p>What it does</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. enriches media content diversity by amplifying marginalised, dissenting and critical voices and ideas, and by challenging the views and legitimacy of the powerful 7. broadens media ownership and control structures, beyond private sector, governments, and public service channels to people and communities themselves

	8. enhances creativity, linguistic and cultural diversity and social cohesion by giving a means of expression and communication to all people and communities
	9. encourages participation by treating its viewers not as passive consumers of media commodities, but as actually or potentially active, engaged and critical actors in their lives, communities and society
	10. develops new, innovative and creative ways of democratising decision-making and control and, producing programme material by participatory means, where the processes involved are paramount.
	We, as Community Television practitioners:
Who and what we are	11. comprise television channels and others engaged in wide public distribution and broadcasting of programmes made by communities; as well as the individuals and groups producing these
	12. operate not-for-profit non-governmental entities whose primary goal is to serve the interests of communities
	13. are editorially independent of government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties
	14. organise as open, accessible, democratic, and participative entities, offering multiple means for people and communities to participate
	15. pursue management, programming and employment policies and practices that are transparent, non-discriminatory and accountable
	16. seek to have ownership and control representative of specific communities or place or of interest
What we do	17. facilitate people and groups to make programmes that challenge injustice, stimulate critical thinking, and educate and entertain in ways that encourage creative reflection and expression
	18. disseminate them through all available channels: broadcasting, internet, cable, DVDs, community events and others, striving to make them accessible - including to those with disability - and affordable to all
	19. actively support the evolution of new forms of media and new modes of production based on collaborative, open and shared projects; including material that not only empowers those engaged in its production but contribute to an emerging global sense of media commons
	20. provide equitable access to training, production and dissemination facilities, thus encouraging creativity and enabling responses to community and individual needs
	21. promote media literacy and critical reflection through training, production, programmes and other activities
	22. reinforce independence by seeking resources and finance from a diversity of sources including especially from our communities
	23. seek to redefine constructively the relationship of media to audience and critically examine the role of advertising and sponsorship in shaping media and audiences
	24. encourage and value volunteers and activists, and seek to create paid employment and develop the craft of media production in satisfactory working and employment accessible to all
	25. foster exchanges and cooperation between each other, including sharing of content, skills and materials, and act together to promote our ideals and practices
	26. seek out, collaborate and act in solidarity with others working to achieve similar ideals, in Ireland, in Europe and globally.

Annex 3: Potential Future Financial Supports for the CTV Sector

The following summarises the most relevant elements of the OSMR Act 2022 and FOMC Implementation Strategy. A more detailed report has been produced as part of this research.

Only those elements that have direct potential to provide support to the CTV Sector in the form of funding schemes to the CTV sector are highlighted here. In the long term, many other areas will inevitably become relevant as the media landscape is reshaped.

Schemes under the **OSMR Act**:

- A **European Works Scheme** may be established to support the production and ancillary costs of audio-visual content. This aims in part to support the development of community broadcasters, including on-demand services. This will depend on the creation of a new European Works Levy to be imposed on major online media platforms.
- The Act mandates the creation of a **Professional Journalistic Practices** scheme for local sound broadcasting and community broadcasting, both radio and television. Potentially, it covers the full costs of trainers and co-funds other costs. This will be supported by a revised Broadcasting Fund, called the Media Fund.

There is currently no timeline or budget associated with this scheme. The FOMC Implementation Strategy, under the DTCSGSM, does not address the above schemes, and it is not clear how and when they will be progressed. There are no deadlines and the scheme has no specific budget attached.

The FOMC Implementation Strategy is well underway and will be completed in stages over the next couple of years. It is designing the broad parameters for **six new media support schemes**, to be implemented by the new CnM and funded under the new Media Fund. Some are more relevant and urgent than others. All grants available from such schemes are proposed to be on a 'contestable' basis; and all but the Community Media Scheme below are open to all media sub-sectors including print.

- The **Local Democracy Reporting** scheme and the **Court Reporting** scheme are the **most urgent** since the DTCSGSM prioritises these during 2023, and will have up to €6 million to support them. Both are open in principle to community television, including in collaboration with other media. They are to be developed and implemented during 2023.

Viable applications to either would have to show high levels of journalistic skills and good networks in among the target groups. There is likely to be very strong interest from local and community radio and from local newspapers.

The potential for CTV here, especially in the Local Democracy Reporting scheme, is significant, though CTV is not seen as the main target.

- The **Community Media Scheme** is the most important, though significant progress is not likely until later in 2023 (when research into the "optimal support mechanism" is due) or 2024. This could be "contestable funds for training, content production, media literacy or other media projects." The idea of a hub is also noted as an example of how to support community media. The BAI will first review the existing CBSS and existing supports from Pobal, Solas and others. The new CnM will then carry out research into the optimal scheme mechanism by the end of

2023. The DTCSGSM will then set out the broad parameters of the scheme, to be developed in detail and implemented by CnM.

- A scheme to support **digital transformation** for “sustainable media organisations” will also be launched probably **during 2024**. This could cover equipment, training, the development of systems, and even support the ‘incubation’ of new digital projects including sustainable non-profit entities.

Potentially, the CTV sector could seek support for instance to build efficient scheduling, streaming and on-demand systems, and possibly even to create member-led non-profit entities. The DTCSGSM’s intention is to develop a broad outline of the scheme, and then to hand it to the CnM for design during 2024.

- The **News Reporting Scheme** is to support public interest journalism on various themes. This is among the least elaborated schemes, and no timeline is given.

In principle, the CTV sector could avail of this. However, it is likely to be some time before it gets underway, and competition would be very strong.

- The **Media Access and Training Scheme** will support career pathways to enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion. It will operate closely with apprenticeship structures, HEIs and the Department of Education, offering bursaries. The goal is to complete preparation by the end of 2024.

The CTV sector has a strong track record of supporting diversity and inclusion, and it is possible that this could be applied within the training and practitioner structures of the sector.

Beyond the new schemes above, the FOMC Implementation Strategy also proposes to maintain the Sound & Vision scheme into the future, possibly incorporating some of these schemes within it. Here, the move to Thematic Rounds, including the Social Benefit Round 48, has been of significant benefits to community, offering the first, at least partially, ring-fenced funding to the sector.

Annex 4: Key Informant Interviews

The following were interviewed, mostly on a one to one basis.

Public Officials

1. Ciaran Kissane. Coimisiún na Meán
2. Liam Boyle. Coimisiún na Meán
3. Kieran Moylan. Department of Rural and Community Development
4. Adam Larragy. Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
5. Noel Ryan. Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.
6. Michael Ryan, Dublin City Council
7. Noel Hayes, Dublin City Council
8. Fiona Quinn, Local Creative Youth Partnership, ETB, Cork City

Cork Community Television: members, volunteers and community producers

9. Siobhán O Neill,
10. Emma Howell
11. Eddie Noonan
12. Barry Mc Carthy
13. Dave Whelan
14. Ger O'Mahony
15. Diarmaid Galvin
16. Audrey O' Mahony
17. Orla Egan
18. Dónal Ó Céilleachair
19. Niall Hurley
20. Anne-Marie Green
21. Viv Sadd
22. Diarmuid Mcintyre

Dublin Community Television: members, volunteers and community producers

23. Ciarán Murray
24. Iris Park
25. David Knox
26. Bill Tyson
27. Des Derwin
28. Declan Cassidy
29. Katrina Costello
30. Ollie McGlinchey
31. Tomás Hardiman
32. John Gormley
33. Elaine King
34. Eddie Brennan
35. Susan Jackson
36. Paul Rogers
37. Ciaran Moore

Others:

38. Kevin MacNamidhe, P5TV
39. Niall Anderson, Irish Film Institute

Annex 5: Survey Questionnaire

The following comprises the Survey questions posed to DCTV and CCTV members as part of this research. (The DTCV survey replaced each occurrence of “CCTV” with “DCTV”.)

1. CCTV broadcasts programmes on a variety of **themes**, grouped below under a number of headings. To what extent is each of these *relevant and interesting* to **your organisation and/or your community** (please respond to all):

	Very relevant	Somewhat relevant	Slightly relevant	Not relevant
Community development activities & projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability and able-bodied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traveller community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music, arts and culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History and heritage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Migration and new communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News from communities around the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternative global news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environment and climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Media literacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children and young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Older people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please add additional areas or themes that you feel CCTV should focus on in their programming:

2. Relevance and quality of programming:

Please indicate the **extent to which you agree** with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Neutral	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	<i>Does not apply</i>
"CCTv disseminates programmes that are of interest to me"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"CCTv programmes in general have good production values"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The overall quality of CCTv broadcasting is high"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"CCTv covers topics that other media somewhat neglect"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The process of making community TV programmes is as important as the final product"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Community participation at all stages is central to community television"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Not all CCTv programmes are made by television professionals, and our appreciation of them is different."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"CCTv brings a unique approach to its programme making and its scheduling."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"CCTv should also be about fun and experimentation."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment on how CCTv could improve its programmes and activities to be more relevant to its target communities? What else could they be doing?