

Animation Ireland's Pre-Budget Submission 2027

31/07/2026



The Irish Animation Industry



A globally recognised Irish success story

Animation Ireland is the representative body for the animation industry across the island of Ireland, representing fifty studios employing more than 2,500 people in high-value, highly skilled, full-time careers.

Over the past two decades, Ireland has built one of the world's most respected animation industries. Today, Irish studios create award-winning television series, feature films and digital content enjoyed by audiences in more than 180 countries and territories. They develop internationally-recognised intellectual property, attract global investment, partner with many of the world's leading broadcasters and platforms, and tell stories that reflect Ireland's creativity, imagination and culture on a global stage.

This success is no accident; it is the result of long-term Government policy working in partnership with an ambitious, innovative and entrepreneurial industry. Strategic investment, targeted tax incentives and public funding have created an internationally competitive sector that delivers economic, cultural and societal returns far beyond its size.

A strategic national asset

Animation is a cornerstone of Ireland's €1 billion audiovisual sector, contributing more than €203.7 million annually to the Irish economy. It is an export-focused industry that creates sustainable, high-value employment while generating inward investment, building Irish-owned intellectual property and strengthening Ireland's position as a global leader in creative production.

Almost half of Ireland's animation studios have been operating for more than a decade, demonstrating the maturity and resilience of the sector. Thirty-five per cent of productions in 2024 had budgets between €1 million and €5 million, reflecting a healthy pipeline of ambitious projects with the capacity to generate significant economic activity throughout the country.

Unlike many industries, animation is not concentrated in one location; studios operate across the island of Ireland, supporting regional employment, attracting investment into towns and cities outside the main urban centres and creating opportunities for highly skilled careers in communities nationwide.

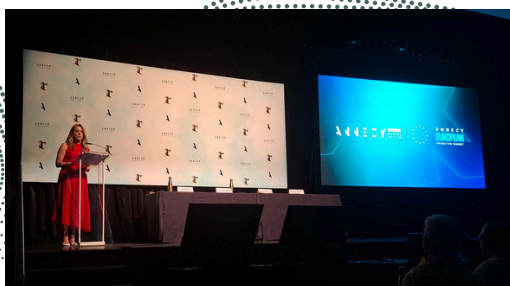
The Irish Animation Industry

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Investing in Ireland's future economy

Animation sits at the intersection of creativity, technology and innovation. As a digital-first industry, it contributes directly to Ireland's digital economy through advanced production pipelines, cutting-edge technologies and highly specialised creative skills. The sector is also embracing sustainable production practices and developing new approaches that support Ireland's ambitions for a greener economy.

Continued investment will ensure Irish studios remain internationally competitive while retaining world-class talent, developing new capabilities and creating the next generation of globally successful Irish companies.



Culture, creativity and Ireland's global reputation

Animation is also one of Ireland's most powerful cultural exports. Irish screen content shapes how Ireland is seen around the world, projecting our creativity, values and identity while ensuring Irish audiences continue to see their own stories, languages and experiences reflected on screen.

Government support has enabled Irish studios not only to service international productions but to create and retain Irish intellectual property. Productions including *Julián*, *My Brother the Minotaur*, *The Sneetches*, *RoboGobo*, *BeddyByes* and *Santa's Holiday* have brought tens of millions of euro in production expenditure into Ireland while showcasing Irish creative excellence to global audiences.

At the same time, Section 481 has supported the creation of distinctly Irish productions including *Lí Ban*, *Mortina*, *Fia's Fairies (Season 2)*, *Mae Bee*, *Maddie & Triggs*, *Puffin Rock* and *Doodle Girl*. These productions strengthen Ireland's cultural identity, create valuable Irish-owned intellectual property and ensure that Irish stories continue to travel the world.

The Irish Animation Industry



Building long-term value

The Irish animation industry is built on two complementary strengths: international production and indigenous intellectual property. Service production attracts foreign direct investment, develops expertise and sustains highly skilled employment. That expertise is then reinvested into the creation of original Irish intellectual property, building companies of scale whose assets and future revenues remain in Ireland.

Co-productions with partners across Europe and beyond further strengthen the sector, enabling Irish studios to share expertise, access international markets and retain greater ownership of their creative output.

This model has been made possible through a combination of industry ambition and Government policy. Section 481, Screen Ireland investment, broadcaster partnerships and regional incentives together provide the financing framework that allows Irish studios to compete internationally while retaining greater ownership of the intellectual property they create. The revenues generated from that IP are reinvested into future productions, supporting sustainable employment, company growth and a virtuous cycle of innovation and investment.

The next phase of growth

Ireland has built an animation industry that is recognised as one of the world's leading centres of creative excellence. However, international competition is intensifying. Countries around the world continue to strengthen production incentives, invest in indigenous content and support the development of creative intellectual property as drivers of economic growth and cultural influence.

The recommendations set out in this submission are designed to build on the success of Government investment to date. By strengthening Section 481, enhancing regional incentives, increasing investment in Screen Ireland, supporting Irish-owned intellectual property and ensuring sustainable investment in public service media, the Government can secure the next phase of growth for one of Ireland's most successful creative industries, delivering lasting economic, cultural and societal benefits for communities across the country.

Recommendations



Recommendation:

Regional Production Incentive

The Challenge

While Ireland has developed a thriving animation sector, growth is not being felt equally across the country. Animation studios already operate successfully in regional centres including Kilkenny, Galway, Limerick, Cork and Dundalk, yet attracting and retaining productions outside the Dublin Metropolitan Area remains increasingly challenging in a highly competitive international marketplace.

At the same time, Government has invested significantly in developing regional creative talent through initiatives such as the National Talent Academies and regional Crew Hubs. Without stronger production incentives, there is a risk that this investment in regional skills will not translate into sustained employment and long-term industry growth.

Recommendation:

Introduce an 8% Section 481 Regional Uplift for all eligible productions taking place outside the designated Dublin Metropolitan Area and Ashford production hub.

Impact

This measure would:

- Drive investment into regional economies.
- Create highly skilled, long-term employment across Ireland.
- Strengthen regional animation clusters.
- Maximise the return on Government's investment in regional skills development.
- Support balanced national economic growth while reducing pressure on Dublin's production infrastructure.



Recommendations



Recommendation:

Extend the Section 481 Scéal Uplift

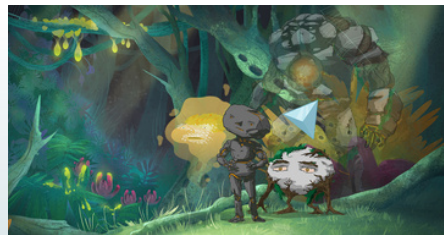
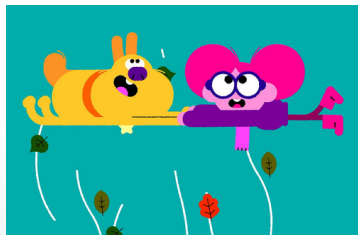
The Challenge

The introduction of the Scéal uplift for feature films has demonstrated the Government's commitment to supporting ambitious Irish storytelling. However, animated television production has evolved dramatically in recent years, with budgets regularly exceeding previous funding models.

Without equivalent support, Irish animation studios face increasing difficulty financing ambitious television projects while competing with international studios operating in jurisdictions offering stronger incentives.

Recommendation:

Extend the Section 481 Scéal uplift to animated television productions with budgets of up to €20 million.



Impact

This would:

- Increase the scale and ambition of Irish television animation.
- Support the creation and retention of Irish intellectual property.
- Generate additional employment across the animation value chain.
- Increase Ireland's competitiveness in attracting international co-productions.
- Build globally successful Irish-owned content.

Recommendations



Recommendation:

Establish a €10 Million Intellectual Property (IP) Stimulus Fund

The Challenge

Ireland has built an internationally respected animation industry, but too much of the long-term commercial value generated by productions leaves the country because ownership of intellectual property frequently rests with international commissioners and streaming platforms.

At the same time, budgets continue to increase as global platforms invest in premium animation. Irish producers increasingly struggle to finance projects at the scale required to compete internationally while retaining ownership of their work.

Without additional intervention, Irish companies risk becoming service providers rather than owners of globally valuable creative assets.

Recommendation:

Establish a €10 million Exchequer-funded Intellectual Property Stimulus Fund, administered by Screen Ireland, to support independent Irish producers developing and retaining ownership of animation and other audiovisual IP.

The fund should:

- support independent producers;
- require Irish IP ownership;
- complement existing Section 481, broadcaster and Screen Ireland funding;
- allocate 25% to children's content.

Impact

The fund would:

- Increase Irish ownership of globally valuable IP.
- Generate recurring export revenues through international sales.
- Build companies of greater scale.
- Create sustainable, high-value employment.
- Enable more Irish stories to reach global audiences.
- Create a virtuous cycle whereby successful productions finance the next generation of Irish content.

Recommendations



Recommendation:

Introduce a Content Levy

The Challenge

Global streaming services derive significant revenue from Irish audiences while making comparatively limited direct investment in indigenous Irish production.

Many European countries, alongside Canada and Australia, have already introduced financial obligations or levies on media service providers to ensure those benefiting from local audiences also contribute to local content creation.

Ireland remains an outlier.

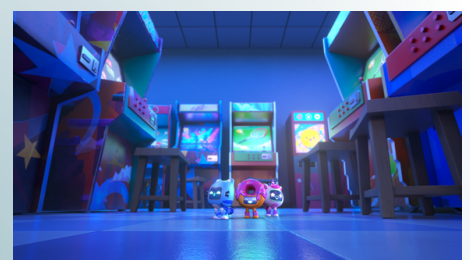
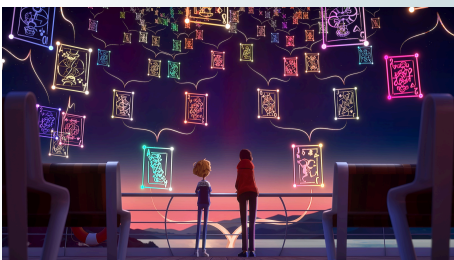
Recommendation:

Introduce a Content Levy on media service providers under the provisions available through Article 13 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

Impact

The fund would:

- A Content Levy would:
- Create a sustainable new funding stream for Irish content.
- Support indigenous production.
- Strengthen Ireland's audiovisual ecosystem.
- Ensure global platforms contribute fairly to the market from which they benefit.
- Align Ireland with international best practice.



Recommendations



Recommendation:

Sustainable Funding for Public Service Media

The Challenge

Irish broadcasters play an essential role in commissioning indigenous animation and unlocking international co-production finance.

However, public service media organisations face growing financial pressures arising from audience fragmentation, declining advertising revenues and competition from global digital platforms.

Without sustainable funding, commissioning activity will reduce, weakening the independent production sector and limiting opportunities for Irish stories.

Recommendation:

Provide adequate, sustainable and multi-annual funding for public service media that complies with the European Media Freedom Act.

Review existing additionality requirements to provide broadcasters with greater flexibility in fulfilling their public service commissioning remit.

Impact

The fund would:

- Protect the commissioning pipeline for Irish animation.
- Support independent producers throughout Ireland.
- Strengthen Ireland's co-production model.
- Increase investment in Irish stories.
- Safeguard an essential pillar of Ireland's democratic and cultural infrastructure.



Recommendations



Recommendation:

Increase Investment in Screen Ireland

The Challenge

Ireland's indigenous screen industry has expanded significantly, yet Screen Ireland's funding has not kept pace with the scale or ambition of the sector.

The agency now supports feature films, television drama, animation, games, skills development and international competitiveness. Demand for funding consistently exceeds available resources, meaning commercially viable projects are frequently unable to proceed.

Recommendation:

Significantly increase Screen Ireland's current and capital funding to reflect the scale and strategic importance of Ireland's audiovisual sector.

Funding should also be benchmarked regularly against competing international jurisdictions.

Impact

Increased investment would:

- Unlock additional indigenous production.
- Support more commercially viable Irish projects.
- Strengthen regional production.
- Expand workforce development and skills programmes.
- Increase Ireland's international competitiveness.
- Deliver greater economic, cultural and export returns for Ireland.

Ireland's animation industry has demonstrated what can be achieved when world-class creativity is matched by ambitious public policy. Animation Ireland's recommendations in this pre-budget submission build on that proven success. Together, they will empower Irish animation studios to create more ambitious productions, retain greater ownership of Irish intellectual property, expand regional employment, strengthen Ireland's global reputation as a centre of creative excellence and ensure that Irish animation continues to deliver economic, cultural and societal value for generations to come.

Contact

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Animation Ireland will answer any questions you may have
on the above
and provide any additional information
or clarification required.



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