



Statement of Performance Commitments 2023

March 2023

Final Draft

Executive Summary

Introduction to the 2023 ASPC

As Ireland's national Irish language Public Service Media (PSM) organisation, TG4 is required by the Broadcasting Act 2009 to prepare an Annual Statement of Performance Commitments (ASPC) in accordance with its objects, strategy and public service statement. This report presents TG4's ASPC for 2023. The appendices present TG4's operating and capital budgets for 2023 along with other key operating metrics.

The Strategic Context for 2023

Despite its constitutional standing, the Irish language behaves as a minority language and like all minoritised languages, it is in danger of 'language shift', the process whereby a speaker community shifts to a different language. In the context of language shift, UNESCO now classifies the Irish language as 'definitely endangered'. Every Irish generation has the privilege and responsibility of maintaining Irish linguistic diversity as part of the worldwide language ecosystem and global linguistic diversity.

TG4's Post-Covid Vision for 2022 - 2025 is fundamentally about building a public sphere for the Irish-speaking community, creating national status for the language and mainstreaming the language within the national sphere. It is based around moving to a more balanced, less monolithic PSM ecosystem in Ireland and on developing the quality and status of TG4's brand to a European level benchmark which has been proven to impact on language shift within minority language communities.

Language science shows us that language shift can be countered. All of the accredited sociolinguistic research confirms that transmission of Irish as a living language within the family domain and between generations is critically important. A supportive framework and opportunities in which Irish can be passed on in a natural way within households and communities are vital. Meaningful and energetic Language Planning strategies must be deployed in three areas to support this. These areas are Language Corpus Planning, Language Acquisition Planning and Language Status Planning.

In the increasingly global and digital world, TG4 has an important role in all three of these areas, especially the development of Language Status Planning for the Irish language. Irish language media is a core element in the combat against language shift

and the maintenance of linguistic diversity. Digital corpus-building, language-based arts, Irish language education and Irish medium education are other very important areas for the development of Irish and the combatting of 'language shift'.

While TG4 can demonstrate many successes in bestowal of status on the Irish language and in helping to mainstream the concept of bilingualism with majority language speakers since TG4 was established almost three decades ago, our Post-Covid Vision clearly states that we can and must do more. Other minority languages have made greater progress because their minority language strategies, including those for media, have been pursued with far greater vitality and investment. TG4's long-term vision is to attain a status closer to that of a broadcaster in societies where bilingualism is stable and where language shift is no longer an existential threat. Public broadcaster role models include those in Canada, Switzerland, Belgium and Spain.

TG4 acknowledges and thanks the work of the government in strengthening TG4 and especially Minister Catherine Martin for her support over the last three budgets. However, TG4 still lags far behind other European minority language broadcasters in terms of funding and scale, such as S4C in Wales or EITB in the Basque Country. S4C is the closest equivalent to TG4 but its overall budget is twice that of TG4. In the short term, TG4 needs to be functioning at least at the level of S4C in Wales in terms of resources and funding.

The Global Context for 2023

Global economic, political and social developments continue to have a major impact on all businesses and societies. The global media landscape also continues to change, with digital technology, social media and connected devices transforming audience viewership and content consumption. PSM faces some of the most significant challenges ever, and for TG4, these challenges are magnified by virtue of being an Irish language content provider in a global, predominantly English language media market.

Global economic, political and social challenges include: environmental shocks such as climate change; the impact of the pandemic; geopolitical shifts and conflict including the continued conflict in Ukraine; energy shortages; disruption to supply chains; and, inflation. These major global challenges continue to cause disruption to

economies, businesses and individuals alike. Further extreme weather, social unrest, and supply chain shortages could have much wider and more severe impacts on global economies. We must continue to address our environment and push for sustainability in everything we do. We must also manage the financial impact of inflationary pressures and our budgets well.

Global media challenges include: technological developments such as AI (artificial intelligence), AR (augmented reality), the Metaverse and the “next” Internet - Web3; the continued rise of the streaming industry, online video, gaming and social media. Social media is seen by younger generations as a one-stop-shop for social connection, news, music, games, user-generated content and personalised information. It competes more than ever, for attention with broadcast and streaming content. TG4 must identify the challenges associated with all media developments and continue to innovate to grow our services and connections with audiences, particularly the next generation, in the face of these developments.

The Strategic & Global Contexts Frame TG4’s ASPC 2023

The Strategic Context, as reflected in TG4’s Post-Covid Vision for 2022 - 2025, along with the Global Context, provide the framework for TG4’s focus in 2023.

As set out in this ASPC, we will continue to grow TG4’s investment in content and services for children’s and younger adult audiences to ensure a deep reach into, and relevance with, these audiences. In September, TG4 will launch the Cúla4 Channel, an important contribution to the normalisation of Irish language children’s content in Ireland. We are investing in new children’s and younger audience content such as entertainment, educational and news content across all platforms including social media. Much more investment is needed in strong, entertaining Irish language content and programming (such as drama) for younger audiences. The younger demographic will determine TG4’s future as a service and the future of the Irish language as a community language and we must continue to build our relevance, resonance and engagement with younger audiences.

TG4 will continue to support the Irish language and Irish-speaking communities, particularly Gaeltacht communities, through our content and services. Irish language media supports the visibility of the Irish language and its daily use in the community, including increasing young people’s engagement with the Irish language. Through TG4’s Publisher Broadcaster model and our investment in Ireland’s regional creative industries, we continue to support the growth of Irish independent production companies and industry talent. Our investment will help to expand the skilled

technical and creative employment in Gaeltacht and regional areas. More employment in the sector helps to keep young Irish speakers in the Irish-speaking and Gaeltacht communities throughout the regions. In 2023, TG4’s increased spend with the Irish independent production sector will enable companies to build on the investment they have made in recent years in production capacity and talent and grow their output.

A key priority for our Irish language audiences and for TG4, is to have editorial control over our news services. In 2023, we aim to make further progress towards this by working on a rebrand and redevelopment of the Nuacht TG4 service (with a view to launching a revamped service in either late 2023 or early 2024). The redevelopment of the services will include establishing a Digital News service and capabilities. At present, TG4’s news service is part of RTÉ’s statutory one hour-a-day provision to TG4, with the main news output being the 7pm Nuacht TG4 bulletin. This is not a distinctive multi-platform Nuacht TG4 service. A news service is at the core of every PSM, demonstrating the values of the broadcaster within the public sphere. Ireland will be better served in diversity and plurality of news by having an independent Nuacht TG4 vision and more wide-ranging news services for Irish language audiences.

We will also continue to expand TG4’s portfolio of curriculum-based educational resources to support Irish language learning and education and contribute to long-term flourishing of the Irish language. We aim to grow the engagement with young learners, teachers and parents and provide resources to bring the best of TG4’s educational content to the classroom and learners at home.

An important commitment for TG4 in 2023 relates to “ESG” or Environmental, Social and Governance. The impact TG4 has on society is a crucial part of our role in the context of the PSM and cultural ecosystem in which we operate. TG4 is not just a broadcast initiative but also part of a broader Government policy to support language, culture and civil rights of Irish citizens. TG4 plays a substantial role in relation to the sustainability of the Irish language, including language promotion, development and attaining a national and international status befitting the first official language of the state. We also have a significant impact on Irish culture and arts, regional and rural development, and social inclusion of minority language communities by supporting the Irish language and Irish-speaking communities and Gaeltacht. These aspects of our role will remain priorities in 2023. TG4 will also prioritise other critical aspects of ESG including environmental sustainability (pursuing our targets for sustainable production and operations), sustainability of our people (employee health and wellbeing),

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and governance (high quality stewardship and being a “trusted” organisation).

In addition to delivering on our commitments for 2023, TG4 looks forward to engaging with the implementation of the recommendations of the Future of Media Commission. The Commission has made 50 recommendations which provide a strategic platform for the transformation of Ireland’s media sector. Many of these recommendations align with the priorities of TG4’s ASPC 2023. For example: editorial control for TG4 over our news services; investment in independent production; environmental sustainability; and, diversity and inclusion among many others. One of the recommendations of the Future of Media Commission (7-2) is a *comprehensive review of the provision of Irish language services and content across the media system, with a focus on institutional structures and opportunities for innovation and collaboration*. TG4 looks forward to engaging with this review and we anticipate that it will be framed in the context of Language Planning Strategies aimed at combatting Irish language shift and preserving our ecosystem of linguistic diversity in Ireland for this generation and for future generations.

Revision of TG4’s Commitments & Targets for 2023

The ASPC for PSM continues to evolve based on the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) Annual Review of Funding for Public Service Broadcasters. The latest BAI review is of 2021, undertaken by Communications Chambers in 2022.

While Communications Chambers proposes that commitments and targets should remain as consistent as possible from year-to-year to support comparison, to enhance TG4’s ASPC, they also recommended a reduction in the number of commitments and targets to focus on the most important goals for the organisation.

TG4 has adopted these recommendations where applicable. However, our proposed metrics reflect the fact that TG4 is not just a broadcast organisation and it is not appropriate to adopt a narrow perspective purely within the scope of Broadcasting legislation. This would fail fundamentally to consider the substantial role of TG4, as critical public infrastructure, in relation to language promotion, language development and attaining a national and international status befitting the first official language of the state. It would also fail to recognise TG4’s other impacts in relation to culture and arts policy, regional and rural development, social inclusion of minority language communities, among many others.

For 2023, TG4 has reduced the number of commitments and targets. We have achieved this by merging and/or integrating commitments and by removing narrative/qualitative targets where appropriate. We have offset some of these reductions by introducing new quantitative and perception metrics. A summary of the changes to TG4’s commitments and targets (2023 Vs. 2022) is set-out in appendix 1.

TG4’s targets for 2023 are based on a combination of actual performance in 2022, consideration of stretch targets for 2023 and, assessment of industry trends and developments. Some of the new targets will be baselined in 2023 but we have provided estimated targets where applicable. When complete, we believe we have a robust set of commitments and targets for TG4 which can be taken forward to future years.

Summary of TG4’s Priorities for 2023

TG4’s key priorities for 2023 include:

- ***Continue to grow our cross-platform audience and viewing levels:***
 - Grow national television audience share to 2.1% and reinstate TG4 as the 6th most watched channel in Ireland.
 - Grow TG4 digital viewing and audience engagement (between 10%-30% on 2022 levels, depending on the platform).
 - Increase TG4’s cross-media reach with Irish language audiences to 72% average weekly reach.
- ***Strengthen TG4’s focus on children’s and younger audiences:***
 - Invest significantly in content and services for audiences in the 15-34 demographic across all platforms including social media.
 - New drama for audience demographics in the following segments: 35-55 years of age; and children’s audiences.
 - Launch a new *Cúla4* channel in September 2023, a dedicated Irish language channel for children, and invest in new children and younger audience’s content including drama, entertainment, educational and children’s news.

- **Invest in Ireland’s regional creative economy:**
 - In 2023, TG4’s investment of €30.6m¹ in creative services in Ireland’s regions will include a €25.4m spend with regional independent production companies². This represents an increase of 17% on the target for 2022. This additional investment in creative services in the regions will increase our contribution to regional economic output.
 - In total, TG4 will spend €35.3m with the Irish independent production sector in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, a 15% increase on 2022 spend.
 - This represents 70% of TG4’s public current funding invested in content from the independent production sector³ and is a 17% increase on the target for 2022.

- **Invest in finding and growing industry talent:**
 - TG4’s 2023 commissioning rounds will continue to include a development component to help build Irish language writing, directing and production skills in the independent production sector.
 - Delivery of a skills and talent development scheme as part of a co-production in the North-West region.
 - Training and development for Producers and Directors of young people’s / children’s content.
 - Irish language short film and short drama schemes, in conjunction with Screen Ireland and the Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF) to develop new talent.
 - Three documentary production schemes to support new talent.
 - Delivery of a journalist training scheme for Irish language journalists.
 - One-year work placements in TG4 for new industry trainees.

- **Focus on Gaeltacht and Irish speaking communities even more:**
 - Work on the rebranding and redevelopment of the TG4 Nuacht service with a view to launching a revamped service in either late 2023 or early 2024. Commence TG4 Digital news services.

- Launch *Cúla4* as a dedicated Irish language children’s channel on Saorview in September 2023. This will include an Irish language news bulletin for the *Cúla4* channel.
- Continue to support Irish language arts, culture and sport through our content, our Irish language feature film scheme, *Cine4*, and through our support for music and cultural events including independent film festivals, cultural gatherings and exhibitions etc.
- Further develop TG4’s portfolio of curriculum-based educational resources.
- Champion Irish language screen production talent and enterprise.
- Continue our work with key stakeholders to support the development of the Irish language and Irish-speaking and Gaeltacht communities.

In 2023, all of TG4’s content commitments will incur an expenditure of €42.6m⁴ (18.3% increase on the target for 2022). This is 85% of TG4’s public funding for the year⁵. Every year, TG4 ensures that the maximum amount possible is spent on Irish language content and in 2023, 79% of TG4’s public funding⁶ will be spent on Irish language content (almost €40m).

TG4’s priorities, commitments and targets for 2023 are summarised overleaf and described thereafter.

¹ Includes spend of €1m in Northern Ireland but excludes spend with creative companies in Dublin and Wicklow and spend on sports and music rights.

² Includes €1m spend with creative companies in Northern Ireland but excludes spend with production companies in Dublin and Wicklow and spend on sports and music rights.

³ Public funding excluding €2m capital funding used for capital projects only.

⁴ Including €3.6m of production staff costs in 2023.

⁵ Current funding plus €2.2m in capital funding for programming.

⁶ Current funding plus €2.2m capital funding for programming. Spend includes €3.6m of production staff costs.

Priorities	Commitments	2023 Targets (Metrics)
	<p>1. Continue to grow TG4's cross-platform viewing and audience.</p>	<p>1. National TV audience share. 2. Position in Top 10 most watched channels in Ireland. 3. Cross-media reach with Irish language audiences. 4. Number of cross-platform video views of TG4 content (Player & Social Media Video Views). 5. Number of Linear & Player minutes watched. 6. Social Media Engagement Rate. 7. Public perception that there is a clear need and role for TG4 in broadcasting in Ireland. 8. Public perception that TG4 provides high quality content and services.</p>
	<p>2. Invest in children's services and content for audiences in the 15-34 demographic, to strengthen younger audience engagement with TG4 and the Irish language.</p>	<p>9. Cross-media reach with Irish language audiences (15-34 year olds). 10. Irish language children's audience average weekly reach. 11. Engagement with Bloc. 12. Engagement with TG4 Foghlaim. 13. Primary schools use of TG4 and Cúla4 Player content.</p>
	<p>3. Serve Irish-speaking and Gaeltacht communities even better.</p>	<p>14. TG4 is recognised as the most positive measure to promote the Irish language and give it prominence. 15. TG4 is recognised as an important service for supporting and promoting the Irish language. 16. TG4 is recognised as an important service for supporting and promoting Irish language culture and arts through Cine4 and its other programming and content. 17. TG4 is recognised for serving Irish speaking and Gaeltacht communities well. 18. Public perception that TG4 keeps me well informed.</p>
	<p>4. Support growth in Ireland's regional creative economy by investing in content and talent development.</p>	<p>19. Spend with creative companies in the regions. 20. Public funding invested in content from the independent production sector. 21. Investment in training & development initiatives. 22. Number of international co-productions / projects supported. 23. Screen sector perception that TG4 champions Irish and regional screen production talent and enterprise.</p>
	<p>5. Deepen TG4's global cultural and linguistic footprint.</p>	<p>24. Investment in Cine4. 25. TG4 international reach (VOD video views). 26. As a custodian of Irish language broadcasting legacy, continue to develop TG4's Irish Language Digital Archive.</p>
	<p>6. Ensure TG4 is adequately funded for growth and that we deliver value from our public funding.</p>	<p>27. Commercial income. 28. Meet annual budgets. 29. Share of public funding invested in Irish language content. 30. Share of public funding spent with the independent production sector. 31. Share of spend with the independent production sector which creates Irish independent production company intellectual property.</p>
	<p>7. Deliver public value through TG4's societal impact and through our sustainability and diversity goals.</p>	<p>32. Public perception that TG4 is essential to the sustainability of the Irish language, Gaeltacht communities and Gaeltacht ethos and identity. 33. Environmental Sustainability and Sustainable Production: Carbon footprint reduction & energy efficiency; sustainable production practices. 34. Sustainability of our people: Employee Satisfaction. 35. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: TG4 is recognised for diversity and alternative viewpoints. 36. Governance & Trust: Public perception that TG4 is trustworthy.</p>