

Appendix 1K – Oireachtas TV Original Programming Proposal

Objective: Deliver a small, high-impact slate of original, in-house produced programmes with *fixed, promotable times* that (1) maximise audience flow and accessibility, and (2) explicitly target “audience acquisition” from **RTÉ One’s Sunday 1 O’Clock News** and **RTÉ One’s Sunday 6 O’Clock News**, plus a **Tuesday 10:00** look-ahead appointment.

1) Scheduling Strategy: build habits, then promote habits

The three strategic junctions

1. Sunday 13:10–14:10 (1 hour)

- Directly adjacent to RTÉ One 1 O’Clock News.
- “Switch-and-stay” opportunity: viewers are already in a news mindset; we keep them in public affairs.

2. Sunday 18:30–19:00 (30 mins)

- Immediately after RTÉ One 6 O’Clock News (Sunday).
- A short, high-pace slot that rewards the news viewer with depth and clarity without feeling “heavy”.

3. Tuesday 10:00–10:30 (weekly)

- A predictable “week ahead” appointment for politically engaged audiences, journalists and sector stakeholders.
- A strong on-demand anchor for the rest of the week.

Why fixed times matter

A settled schedule allows:

- **Consistent EPG discovery** (viewers can find it without searching).
- **Cross-promotion in Live Procedural programming** (billboards, trails, lower-thirds, end-credit promotions).
- **Repeatable social cut-downs** (“This Sunday at 13:10...” becomes a weekly/monthly rhythm).

Essential EPG requirement

All first-run originals must be flagged as “**New**” on the EPG to differentiate from proceedings and repeats, and to improve click-through in the guide.

2) The Proposed Slate (in-house deliverable)

This slate is designed to be:

- Presenter-led if studio based (more personable, more contextualised)
- Event led and contributor driven if archive based or observational.
- Graphic-supported (clarity, pace, modern feel)
- Economical (shared RX days, shared editorial pipeline, repeatable formats)

A) Sunday 13:10 (1 hour):

Around The Houses (monthly)

- **Slot: Second Sunday of each month @ 13:10**
- **Format:** Same core content as previous years, updated through presenter-led storytelling and clearer context.
- **Presenter: Sam Assad** (key change: makes the programme feel “of this moment” and easier to access for newer audiences).
- **Production enhancement:** Add an **Oireachtas TV Flying Key** for transitions—raises production value and brand cohesion.

Beyond The Houses (monthly)

- **Slot: Last Sunday of each month @ 13:10**
- **Format:** Parliamentary highlights + relevant international parliamentary content connected to Irish issues or issues of global interest.
- **Sources:** Stormont, Westminster, Strasbourg, Washington, Canberra, and others where access/footage is permitted.
- **Presenter: Sam Assad** (deliberately positioned as the companion to *Around The Houses*).
- **Editorial promise:** “What happened elsewhere matters here.”

Why this pairing works:

Two fixed Sundays per month become easy to remember, easy to trail, and they feel like one strand rather than two unrelated shows.

B) Sunday 18:30 (30 mins):

In Focus (monthly)

- **Slot: Last Sunday of each month @ 18:30**
- **Positioning:** A subtle reformat/rename of *Oireachtas TV Debates* to avoid schedule confusion and signal freshness.
- **Structure:**
 - 2 VTs + 2 related discussions (as current)
 - **Plus a third, shorter discussion or VT** to add pace and widen scope
- **Graphics upgrades:**

- Continuous topic graphic throughout
- More “ancillary info” graphics (key facts, timelines, who/what/why now)

In Depth (monthly)

- **Slot: Second Sunday of each month @ 18:30**
- **Format:** A single subject examined forensically by a **panel of three**, guided by a **new presenter** (distinct identity from In Focus).
- **Production efficiency:** Filmed on the **same RX day as In Focus** to maximise studio economies (crew, lighting, set, gallery, sound).

Why these two are scheduled on 2nd + last Sunday:

They mirror the 13:10 strand pattern, creating a “two-Sundays-a-month” habit in *both* target junctions.

C) Sunday 18:30 (30 mins):

To provide certainty and variety, the remaining Sundays at 18:30 are filled with a rotating set of originals.

Tionnól (every two months – Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, Dec)

- **Slot: Third Sunday (every second month) @ 18:30**
- **Purpose:** A predictable Irish-language or Irish-culture civic strand with fixed cadence.
- **RX Locations:** First and last recorded in studio, each of the others recorded in one provincial location each.

The Address (every two months – Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sept, Nov)

- **Slot: Third Sunday (alternating with Tionnól) @ 18:30**
- **Event-led special** built around a prominent Address to the Joint Houses of the Oireachtas by a significant international figure, using extended excerpts of the speech as the structural spine of the programme.
- **Context and significance** explored through archival material, background analysis and thematic framing — why the speaker matters, why the invitation matters, and what the address signals for Ireland internationally.
- **Contributor-driven insight** from historians, constitutional scholars, former diplomats, policy experts, journalists, civil society leaders, and subject-matter academics — deliberately excluding current serving politicians to maintain editorial independence.
- **Legacy and impact focus**, examining how the themes of the address resonate beyond the day itself — culturally, economically, diplomatically or socially — positioning the programme as both record and reflection rather than debate.

Within The Houses (every two months – Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, Dec)

- **Slot: First Sunday (alternating months) @ 18:30**
- **An observational, access-driven strand** exploring the people, processes and places that sustain parliamentary democracy — beyond formal debate and chamber exchanges.
- **Human-centred storytelling**, focusing on the expertise and daily work of clerks, procedural advisors, archivists, ushers, legal teams, researchers and other specialist staff whose roles are essential to the functioning of the Houses.
- **Institutional life beyond Leinster House**, following elected representatives as they represent Ireland in international parliamentary settings and multilateral forums — such as plenary sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), UN engagements, or other inter-parliamentary bodies — with emphasis on the parliamentary function rather than party politics.
- **Unique civic moments and spaces**, capturing unusual activities within the Houses — including visits by delegations, educational groups or community organisations — alongside insights into the architecture, heritage and traditions that shape the institution's working culture.

In Motion (every two months – Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sept, Nov)

- **Slot: First Sunday (alternating with Within The Houses) @ 18:30**
- **Legislation-led special** built around a major Bill that has completed its passage through the Houses, using key moments from the parliamentary stages to anchor the narrative.
- **Origins and intent** explored through archival material, committee extracts and explanatory graphics — examining why the legislation was introduced, the issues it sought to address, and how it evolved during scrutiny.
- **Contributor-driven analysis** from legal scholars, policy experts, economists, sectoral practitioners, civil society representatives, and journalists — providing informed interpretation without featuring current serving politicians.
- **Real-world impact and legacy** assessed by examining how the Act shapes policy, public services, rights, or economic activity — focusing on the practical impact the legislation leaves on Irish society.

D) Tuesday 10:00 (Weekly)

Ahead Of The House (weekly)

- **Slot: Every Tuesday @ 10:00**
- **Format:** A forward-looking guide to the week's business in the Houses—what matters, why it matters, what to watch for.
- **Editorial style:** Clear, brisk, explanatory.
- **Output value:** Also functions as a weekly digital anchor (clips, socials, newsletter embed, stakeholder sharing).

3) The “Settled” Pattern (simple rules viewers can learn)

Sunday 13:10 (1 hour)

- **2nd Sunday:** *Around The Houses* (New)
- **Last Sunday:** *Beyond The Houses* (New)
- Other Sundays: curated repeats / commissioned originals & Acquisitions

Sunday 18:30 (30 mins)

- **1st Sunday:** *Loose Strand / Footprints* alternating (New)
- **2nd Sunday:** *In Depth* (New)
- **3rd Sunday:** *Tionnól / The Address* alternating (New)
- **Last Sunday:** *In Focus* (New)

Tuesday 10:00

- **Every Tuesday:** *Ahead Of The House* (New)

This creates a schedule that is:

- Predictable (appointment viewing)
- Promo-friendly (“First Sunday at 18:30...”, “Second Sunday at 13:10...”)
- Flexible for months with 4 vs 5 Sundays (last Sunday rule always holds)

4) Promotion Plan: use Live Procedural programming as the engine

Because fixed slots are promotable slots, the promotion can be built into daily output:

On-air (procedural) tools

- End-credit billboards: “Next: Sunday 18:30 – *In Depth* (New)”
- Lower-third prompts during relevant debates/committees: “More context Sunday 13:10”
- Short, repeatable trails that don’t date quickly (template-based)

Digital

- Cut-downs designed at edit stage (30–60 sec explainers, key exchanges, “what it means” moments)
- Tuesday show provides weekly promo hooks for Sunday shows (“This week we’ll also examine...”)

Branding

- Flying key transitions and continuous topic graphics create a *unified Oireachtas TV original look* that viewers recognise instantly.

5) Accessibility & Audience Growth (built-in, not bolted-on)

To maximise accessibility and broaden beyond the core audience:

- Clear onscreen graphics that summarise context (names, roles, votes, timelines)
- Consider **Irish Sign Language** provision where appropriate/feasible for key episodes
- Strong on-demand packaging: each episode clearly titled, clipped, and chaptered where possible
- Repeat windows: a consistent repeat later in the week (especially for Sunday output) to catch those who missed the junction

6) In-house feasibility and efficiencies

This proposal is designed for an in-house unit to deliver reliably:

Economies of scale

- One shared RX day per month for **In Focus + In Depth** (shared crew, set, lighting, gallery)
- Shared graphic templates across all shows (topic strap, lower-third system, transitions)
- Presenter continuity (Sam Assad as the face of the 13:10 strand)

Rights/clearances

- *Beyond The Houses* requires a defined workflow for international parliamentary footage permissions and attribution. The format is flexible: if a week has limited access, the programme can lean more heavily on explainers and Irish relevance packages.

7) Success Measures (what “working” looks like)

- **Audience retention at junctions** (Sunday 13:10 and 18:30)
- **Repeat viewing** (are people coming back on the 2nd/last Sunday?)
- **On-demand performance** (starts, completion, clip shares)
- **EPG discovery uplift** driven by consistent scheduling + “New” flag

8) Summary of Deliverables

- **Sunday 13:10 (monthly x2):**
 - *Around The Houses* (2nd Sunday) – Sam Assad
 - *Beyond The Houses* (Last Sunday) – Sam Assad
- **Sunday 18:30 (monthly x2 + rotating):**
 - *In Depth* (2nd Sunday) – new presenter
 - *In Focus* (Last Sunday) – reformatted *Debates*
 - *Loose Strand / Footprints* alternating (1st Sunday)
 - *Tionnól / The Address* alternating (3rd Sunday)
- **Tuesday 10:00 (weekly):**
 - *Ahead Of The House*
- **EPG:** All first runs marked **New**