

# Five applicants for vacant radio licence

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FIVE companies have applied for the licence to operate a national commercial radio station once held by Century Radio. The station is likely to be competing with RTE by the end of 1996.

The five applicants are: Ireland 100, whose shareholders include *The Irish Times*, the directors of the Dublin radio station FM 104, and Virgin Radio; National FM, led by Scottish Radio, which operates Radio Clyde; New Ireland Broadcasting Group, headed by 96 FM in Cork; Energy Radio Ltd, led by the Dublin station 98FM and including Highland Radio, Galway Bay FM and WLR in Waterford, and Radio Ireland, a consortium that includes a number of Irish showbusiness interests.

The Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC), had hoped for as many as eight applicants. It is believed Radio Limerick and the British commer-

cial station Classic FM had indicated their interest, but did not apply by last Saturday's midnight deadline.

The Ireland 100 Productions has said it will be emphasising quality programmes with resources devoted to news and current affairs. *The Irish Times* is the largest single shareholder at 25 per cent, but the directors of FM 104, while listed individually, hold a 30 per cent share collectively. The consortium also includes the Belfast-based Downtown Radio.

Energy Radio, it is believed, is directing its programmes at a 15 to 25-year-old age group — the market gap identified by research carried out last year on behalf of the IRTC.

Radio Ireland includes Ms Moya Doherty, the producer of *Riverdance*, Hothouse Flowers manager, Mr Robbie Wootton, and the concert promoter, Mr Denis Desmond. It is believed that its application put the emphasis on Irish-produced music.