

April 16th 2024

Dear Graham,

It is with deep regret that Motorsport Ireland today confirms that Ireland is no longer being considered to host a round of the FIA World Rally Championship in 2025. On Monday April 15th Motorsport Ireland finally received a communication from Minister Thomas Byrne, Minister of State for Sport, Physical Education and the Gaeltacht that his Department with respect to funding for the events. Unfortunately, this communication that the Department would need “at least six months” to undertake further independent economic assessments and analysis of our proposal.

As you will be aware we approached the Government back in June 2023 and at the time had a fruitful meeting with Minister Byrne and his colleagues where we presented how we can showcase Ireland on the world stage by bringing the World Rally Championship to Ireland for a three-year period. After the meeting we were referred to the Major Sports Events Unit whom we engaged with and submitted a full event screening application on October 6th, 2023.

To date, we have received no questions or feedback on any of the documents we submitted despite multiple communications to the Department asking if they required any additional information. On January 8th this year, the Major Sports Events Unit advised us by email; *“We don’t require any further information from you at this time, thanks. What you have already sent us has been the basis of a submission that is under consideration by senior management. We hope to be in a position to issue a response to you in the coming weeks.”*

On January 23rd we emailed Minister Byrne seeking a meeting, unfortunately we did not receive an acknowledgement to that email, let alone a reply. We emailed further requests on February 13th, February 22nd, March 4th and March 11th. We did receive a response to the March 11th email, however this response directed us back to the Major Sports Events Unit whom earlier in March had informed us they had completed their review of our submission and that it was now with the Minister for a final decision. Due to having received no update the Department by the Q1 deadline, we requested and were granted, an extension of a fortnight from the promoter. In our meeting with Minister Byrne last June he stated that we were doing the right thing by coming good and early with respect to a funding request for a 2025 event.

It is extremely frustrating to learn only yesterday, six months after our submission, that the Department now require a further six months to assess our proposal. As a result, it is with a heavy heart that I inform you and your region that the dream is over for 2025. The demand for the limited number of slots in the WRC calendar is running at an all-time high and the promoter is in a position to choose host countries that are able to commit and thus benefit from a multi-year major event strategy.

Without the unequivocal support of Government we cannot meet the requirements of the promoter. We always stated that the FIA World Rally Championship could only come to Ireland with the financial support of Government, while always being aware that the funding may not be forthcoming. The promoter deadline means that this this great opportunity for Ireland will be handed over to another country for 2025.

This decision is in no way any reflection on your area. The endless hours and meetings you have held with all your elected representatives, local authorities, civic bodies, Chambers of Commerce etc. have been incredible, and you and your team showed true leadership and direction. When we visited your area, we were overcome by the magnitude of positivity towards the event to happen and the passion to deliver it.

I wish to thank you and all in your region for the incredible effort and work you have put into this process. We will continue to liaise with Minister Byrne, his Department and WRC Promoter GmbH to explore the possibility of alternative hosting years beyond 2025.

Yours sincerely,



Aiden Harper
President – Motorsport Ireland