

BBC Public Purpose Remit: Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

You can expect the BBC to offer the best examples of creative work that engage and delight audiences, break new ground and encourage interest in cultural, creative and sporting activities.

What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

- 1. Provide output that is distinctive and creative on all its platforms.**
BBC output should be distinctive. The BBC should regularly include output that breaks new ground, develops fresh approaches, sets trends, and takes creative risks, from drama and comedy to entertainment and sport. It should do this across all the platforms on which it operates.
- 2. Ensure enrichment for all audiences by covering a wide range of cultural activities.**
The BBC should offer its audiences the best examples of many kinds of creative activity from urban music to opera, from ballroom dancing to football, always striving to expand horizons and encourage audiences into unfamiliar territory, including minority sports.
- 3. Encourage active participation in cultural activities.**
The BBC's programming should stimulate people to take part in a wide range of cultural and sporting events and activities. Partnerships with other organisations will often help in achieving this.
- 4. Provide a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining content.**
Entertainment should remain a key priority for the BBC. BBC output should entertain, in the sense of engaging, absorbing, challenging or delighting audiences in ways that demonstrate creative excellence.
- 5. Foster creativity and nurture and support UK talent across a wide range of genres.**
The BBC should nurture UK talent by introducing new production, writing and on-air talent to audiences. The BBC should also aim to bring the best talent to its audiences from across the UK's creative community.

Guidance on how the Trust intends to measure performance against the Public Purpose priorities is contained in Annex I. Annex II explains the priorities, and how they have been developed, in more detail.

Annex I: Purpose Remit Measurement

In order to monitor the BBC's delivery of the Public Purposes, the Trust will use largely quantitative measures based on licence fee payer perceptions of the BBC's delivery of the Purpose priorities. In some cases it will be necessary to supplement or replace such measures with qualitative research on priorities which are not readily amenable to survey questions and therefore require more in-depth research. Where appropriate, the Trust will also gather comparative data, using its survey questions, to assess the BBC's performance relative to other media providers.

For details about how the Trust will use these measures in evaluating the BBC's effectiveness in delivering its Public Purposes, please see the Purpose Remit Operating Framework.

Priority (i): Provide output that is distinctive and creative on all its platforms.

The Trust will measure:

Audience perceptions of the BBC providing creative and distinctive content.

Priority (ii): Ensure enrichment for all audiences by covering a wide range of cultural activities.

The Trust will measure:

Audience perceptions of the BBC helping them to enjoy their current interests, hobbies and passions and introducing them to new ones.

Priority (iii): Encourage active participation in cultural activities.

The Trust will measure:

Audience perceptions of the BBC encouraging them to take part in specific events or activities.

Priority (iv): Provide a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining content.

The Trust will measure:

Audience perceptions of the BBC having a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining programmes and content.

Priority (v): Foster creativity and nurture and support UK talent across a wide range of genres.

The Trust will measure this priority qualitatively amongst opinion leaders in the wider creative community and amongst the creative community within the BBC itself.

Annex II: Explanatory Note

Introduction

This annex explains the background to the development of the 'stimulating creativity and cultural excellence' Purpose Remit.

Under its Charter and the Agreement the BBC has six Public Purposes, which are:

1. sustaining citizenship and civil society;
2. promoting education and learning;
3. stimulating creativity and cultural excellence;
4. representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities;
5. bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK;
6. in promoting its other Purposes, helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services and, in addition, taking a leading role in the switchover to digital television.

For each Public Purpose the Trust must adopt a Purpose Remit setting out priorities and specifying how the Executive Board's performance against these priorities will be judged. The Trust must consult publicly in developing the Purpose Remits before adopting them.

The six Public Purposes should not be seen as entirely separate aims but as parts of a whole whose boundaries necessarily overlap. The six Remits should therefore be read together – and within the context of the BBC's overall mission to inform, educate and entertain.

Subsequent to public consultation, the Trust will use the Remits to commission Purpose Plans from the Executive Board. These will set out how the BBC's services and supporting activities will deliver the Purpose priorities. Once it has approved the Purpose Plans, the Trust will amend Service Licences, as necessary, to reflect the role that services play in delivering the priorities set out in Purpose Remits.

The Trust will conduct a full review of the Purpose Remits in 2011/12.

This annex is divided into three sections:

1. Scope of the Public Purpose
This sets out the types of output and activities to be covered by the Purpose, as required by the Charter and Agreement.
2. Market Context and BBC Role

In this section the overall market context for the delivery of the Purpose is described, including major developments in terms of technologies, audiences and the wider political and policy context. Against this background, the BBC's particular role in delivering the Purpose is outlined.

3. Priorities

This section sets out, in detail, the priorities that the Trust has set the Executive Board.

1. Scope of the Public Purpose

The Charter and Agreement require the Trust to ensure that the BBC 'enriches the cultural life of the UK through creative excellence in distinctive and original content' and to 'foster creativity and nurture talent'. The BBC should also 'promote interest, engagement and participation in cultural activity among new audiences'. In doing so it should 'have regard to the need for the BBC to have a film strategy, and for appropriate coverage of sport, including sport of minority interest'.

2. Market Context and BBC Role

2.1 Market Context and Developments

The media play a key role in the UK's creative economy.

Television, radio, internet, film and print – which together make up the media industry – are only one part of the wide range of organisations and individuals making up the UK's creative economy. The full range includes musicians, artists, theatre companies, museums and heritage centres, galleries and libraries, as well as disciplines such as sport, design and architecture. However, within this spectrum the media have traditionally played a uniquely prominent role – as the key gatekeepers and signposters to the rest of the creative economy, and also as a vibrant creative force in their own right. Broadcast media are particularly significant as they absorb so much of people's leisure time.

The UK is becoming more diverse culturally.

The UK is made up of an increasingly diverse set of communities and cultures. These reflect factors such as national and regional origins, ethnicity and faith. The workings of devolution are tending to increase the UK nations' sense of themselves as distinct cultural entities within the UK. Net immigration is continuing. The number of people living in the UK who were born abroad is increasing and many individuals in the UK maintain links with their cultural roots outside the UK. At the

same time, second and third generation non-indigenous communities continue to develop their own particular identities. Globalisation is playing a part too – increasingly there is as free a trade in culture as there is in goods and services, and the UK is an active importer and exporter. As a result there is a growing demand from UK audiences for the best of international culture.

Digital technology brings new opportunities for creativity but may also undermine the traditional role of the media.

The media act as a conduit between creators and audiences. Much of the influence of the media stems from this role as gatekeeper. However, the spread of digital technology is changing this role. Digital technology allows creators and audiences to connect with each other without following the traditional routes provided by the media industry. Digital technology is also itself an enabler of creativity as it allows very large numbers of people to express themselves in creative ways - and to publish the results to potentially very large audiences without the need for traditional intermediaries.

Changes in the media market pose challenges for the UK's creative economy and may reduce choice for some audiences.

Apart from the change in the role of the traditional media, the media market as a whole is changing rapidly. Audiences have fragmented; advertising revenues have come under intense pressure; costs of key rights and talent – in, for example, sport, comedy, drama and film – have risen significantly; and the spread of digital technology has undermined the market position of some traditional media, although conversely, new media provides new distribution channels for broadcasters and opportunities to find new audiences and meet audience needs.

These developments pose challenges for the UK's creative economy. For example, the richness and diversity of UK broadcasting is a function of the richness and diversity of the UK broadcast production base, which ranges from independent production companies to large in-house network studios. Changes to the media market may put pressure on broadcasters to seek to reduce costs, including content costs. This may lead a broadcaster to switch from UK-originated programming to less costly imported material, or to reduce its commercial risk by repeating tried and tested formats rather than commissioning output that breaks new ground. In the event that such choices become the norm, the richness and diversity of the UK production sector and the choice of output available to audiences may both be reduced.

Technology is also increasingly allowing for pay per view or subscription funding for certain types of programmes. This may take these programmes beyond the reach of the less well-off and thereby lead to a further reduction of choice for such members of the audience.

2.2 The BBC Role

These developments suggest a public service imperative to ensure that everyone in the UK continues to have access to a wide range of high-quality, distinctive and original UK content that demonstrates creative excellence. The BBC should pursue this objective through its own efforts and in partnership with other organisations. BBC content should reflect the cultural diversity of the UK and the creative energy it produces.

Creativity, however, cannot simply be mandated. By its nature it is unpredictable and often unconventional. The BBC must have the organisational flexibility and openness to allow creativity to flourish, and the strength and the self-confidence to accept the risks inherent in the pursuit of innovation. By pursuing these objectives, the BBC will stimulate cultural excellence and also support the continuance of a diverse UK production base. The BBC should also stimulate interest, engagement and participation in many different kinds of cultural activity among new audiences – and there is an important role for partnerships with other organisations in achieving this.

3. Priorities

In delivering this Purpose the Trust will focus on the following priorities for the Executive Board, through which the BBC will also, to an appropriate extent, promote the delivery of the Public Purpose for 'leading digital switchover and encouraging emerging communications technologies'. The Trust has developed the following priorities with reference to the requirements of the Charter and Agreement, the emerging market context in which the BBC is operating and an understanding of the needs of licence fee payers.

(i) Provide output that is distinctive and creative on all its platforms.

Audiences expect the BBC to provide programming that is creative and enjoyable, but there is evidence that audiences feel that television lacks innovation.¹ Some genres – such as UK comedy and film – carry a particularly high risk of failure. There is therefore a

¹ BBC Trust Purpose Remit consultation: licence fee payer quantitative research; June 2007. Ofcom review of public service television broadcasting, Volume 1 – the role of television in society, audience opinions and perceptions: April 2004

concern that these genres may be adversely affected if their creation and innovation is left entirely to market forces. The BBC's secure funding through the licence fee puts it in a stronger position than commercial broadcasters to take creative risks. The BBC also has an important role to play in innovating on the internet and other new platforms.

(ii) Ensure enrichment for all audiences by covering a wide range of cultural activities.

Audiences expect the BBC to cover a very broad range of cultural activities.² In music, for example, they should stretch from live orchestral performance to the best of new UK urban music. In sport they should range from the biggest events in the international sporting calendar to niche UK sports with a loyal regional following. In drama they should cover classic costume drama and new work but also well-made soaps. In entertainment, mainstream popular hits, but risk-taking experimental material too. In each case the BBC should strive to offer the best of that genre available and, where appropriate to support it with expert presentation and context, thereby enriching audiences' experience and knowledge.. The BBC should also have a film strategy.

In meeting these aspirations, the BBC must respond to the cultural needs of *all* its audiences – but always striving to expand horizons and encourage audiences into unfamiliar territory. There is great potential to use digital platforms alongside television and radio to build knowledge and, in particular, to meet the expectations of younger audiences.

(iii) Encourage active participation in cultural activities.

As part of its provision of cultural output, the BBC has a responsibility to stimulate and facilitate active engagement in a wide range of cultural activities including sport and the arts, especially among new audiences. This includes encouraging participation in cultural and sporting life. Partnerships with other cultural organisations will often help to expand the beneficial effect of the BBC's activities.

(iv) Provide a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining content.

In the context of this Purpose, 'entertainment' has a wider meaning than 'amusement'. All BBC content, whatever the genre, should strive to entertain in the sense of engaging, absorbing, challenging or delighting audiences. The BBC's mission is to 'inform, educate and

² BBC Trust Purpose Remit consultation: licence fee payer quantitative research; June 2007

entertain', and entertaining audiences remains a key role of the BBC and one that was endorsed during the Charter Review process.³

(v) Foster creativity and nurture and support UK talent across a wide range of genres.

As one of the UK's most significant cultural patrons, the BBC carries important responsibilities to build on its record of fostering creativity and supporting UK talent. The BBC's key role in nurturing production and performing talent across many cultural genres is widely acknowledged.⁴ The BBC therefore has a responsibility to commission the best ideas and new talent wherever they may be found. The BBC should continue to enrich creativity in all its forms, encouraging new thinking within the creative community. The BBC must also remain alert to new developments across the UK's creative community and find ways to bring the best of its output and skills to BBC audiences.

³ A public service for all: the BBC in the digital age, DCMS; March 2006

⁴ Review of the BBC's Royal Charter, What you said about the BBC, DCMS: July 2004