

# **BBC Public Purpose Remit:** Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

# Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

You can rely on the BBC to provide internationally-respected news services to audiences around the world and you can expect the BBC to keep you in touch with what is going on in the world, giving you an insight into the way people live in other countries.

## **What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose**

### **1. Build a global understanding of international issues:**

#### **(a) Provide international news broadcasting of the highest quality.**

The BBC's journalism for international audiences should share the same values as its journalism for UK audiences: accuracy, impartiality and independence. International audiences should value BBC news and current affairs for providing reliable and unbiased information of relevance, range and depth.

#### **(b) Enable individuals to participate in the global debate on significant international issues.**

The BBC should inform conversation and debate, providing forums where its international audiences can debate issues they find important.

### **2. Enhance UK audiences' awareness and understanding of international issues.**

The BBC should provide high quality coverage of global issues in its news and current affairs and other output for the UK. Coverage should serve all audiences and ensure a breadth of perspective. The BBC should offer a high-quality service of international media monitoring.

### **3. Broaden UK audiences' experience of and exposure to different cultures from around the world.**

The BBC should provide output that increases all UK audiences' knowledge of other societies from around the world and their concerns. The BBC should also bring to its UK audiences high-quality international music, film, arts and other creative work.

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)(a): Provide international news broadcasting of the highest quality.**

The Trust will measure:

Global audience perceptions of the BBC providing high quality international journalism.

### **Priority (i)(b): Enable individuals to participate in the global debate on significant international issues.**

The Trust will measure:

Global audience perceptions of the BBC encouraging them to enter into conversation and debate about current affairs and international issues.

### **Priority (ii): Enhance UK audiences' awareness and understanding of international issues.**

The Trust will measure:

Audience perceptions of the BBC ensuring that they are aware of and understand what's going on in the world.

### **Priority (iii): Broaden UK audiences' experience of and exposure to different cultures from around the world.**

The Trust will measure:

Audience perceptions of the BBC helping them to understand and appreciate different cultures and lifestyles of people from around the world.

## **Annex II: Explanatory Note**

### **Introduction**

This Annex explains the background to the development of the 'bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK' 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 Agreement requires the Trust to ensure the BBC fulfils a dual obligation: on the one hand to 'make people in the UK aware of international issues and of the different cultures and viewpoints of people living outside the UK through news and current affairs and other outputs such as drama, comedy, documentaries, educational output and sports coverage'; and on the other hand 'to bring high quality international news coverage to international audiences'. Both roles are of equal importance.

#### **2. Market Context and BBC Role**

##### **A. Bringing the UK to the world**

##### **2.1 (A) Market Context and Developments**

###### **The global context**

Economic globalisation is changing international relationships and interdependencies. New economic giants are emerging, creating new opportunities for trade as well as new threats to existing patterns of economic activity. Overall, the world is growing richer, but areas of great poverty remain, and concerns about the global environmental impact of economic development are growing. There are many unresolved international security issues injecting instability and uncertainty.

**Traditionally, global press and television target business; global radio has a wider mission.**

The global business and professional communities are well served by an increasing range of internationally available publications. These communities are also the key targets for the growing number of global television news channels. Global radio services, by contrast, generally have a broader mission to enhance global understanding across societies as a whole. However, with satellite coverage becoming more

widespread, audiences at local and regional levels have an increasing choice of cable and satellite television and radio stations.

**Although internet usage continues to grow, many are still reliant on traditional media.**

The internet - where it is accessible - is increasingly important as a source of news and an enabler of debate. Mobile and on-demand services are increasingly valued. Where the digital infrastructure is still undeveloped, audiences rely more on traditional radio broadcasts.

**Trusted news and insight are at a premium.**

While sources of information are rapidly increasing, sources of understanding remain scarce. At the same time global media markets vary widely in their degree of openness and freedom. Censorship and central direction are commonplace, albeit in varying degrees. Trustworthy, accurate and impartial news and analysis is greatly sought after.

## **2.2 (A) The BBC Role**

This market context has led the Trust to identify a clear public service imperative for the BBC to continue to provide high-quality, trustworthy, accurate and impartial news and analysis to international audiences as it has done for more than 70 years. By doing so the BBC should generate esteem and respect for the UK and its values, and reinforce the UK's global influence.

The manner in which such news services are provided will alter over time to reflect changes in geopolitics, technology and audiences.

## **B. Bringing the world to the UK**

### **2.1 (B) Market Context and Developments**

**The prospects for International news coverage on UK television are broadly positive<sup>1</sup>, although there is evidence of a decline in factual programming.**

The very significant changes in the global context outlined above might be expected to bring about increased reporting and analysis of these trends in UK media. A 2007 Ofcom report found that it was likely that the main public service broadcasting channels would want to continue to offer UK national and international news after digital

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<sup>1</sup> New News, Future News: The challenge for television news after digital switchover, Ofcom; June 2007

switchover, with or without regulatory obligation. However, there is also evidence of a decline in the volume of factual international programming.<sup>2</sup> There is also less content dealing with significant global issues and more dealing with international lifestyles. These trends are likely to continue as new channels proliferate and competition for audiences intensifies.

**The internet opens up the UK to the world, but its trustworthiness is variable.**

The internet gives UK audiences easy access to an enormous range of information about the world. However, the quality of the information is variable. Audiences seek the reassurance of trusted brands and trusted guides.

**The UK population is increasingly diverse.**

The UK continues to experience net immigration. The number of people living in the UK who were born abroad is increasing. Many individuals in the UK maintain links with their communities of origin outside the UK. This in turn creates a demand for content across a range of genres that reflects those origins.

**2.2 (B) The BBC Role**

These developments suggest a public service imperative for the BBC to make UK audiences aware of international issues, cultures and viewpoints. This should be achieved through the provision of engaging content across a wide range of genres and across all BBC platforms. In terms of online provision, the BBC should provide trustworthy international content on its own websites and act as a trusted guide to appropriate international content elsewhere on the internet.

**3. Priorities**

In delivering this Purpose, the Trust will focus on the following priorities, through which the BBC will, 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) Build a global understanding of international issues:**

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<sup>2</sup> Between 2000/01 and 2005 – Factual international programming on UK public service TV 2005, 3WE

**(a) Provide international news broadcasting of the highest quality.**

Many international audiences and organisations view the BBC as the only source of reliable and unbiased information.<sup>3</sup> By continuing to provide this, the BBC contributes to the development of democratic values and civil societies around the world. Additionally, audience research demonstrates the value UK audiences place on the BBC's international reputation.<sup>4</sup> Television, radio and the internet all contribute to this.

**(b) Enable individuals to participate in the global debate on significant international issues**

International dialogue and debate helps to build mutual understanding between peoples. The BBC's international reputation for trustworthiness and impartiality means it is uniquely well placed to host such debates on significant international issues. The BBC should encourage people to join the debate at their own local level although its global internet presence also provides opportunities to enable international conversations to take place reflecting a great diversity of views.

**(ii) Enhance UK audiences' awareness and understanding of international issues**

Audiences have indicated a desire for improved coverage of international issues, including through genres other than news and current affairs.<sup>5</sup> The BBC should respond to this by making available high-quality coverage of international issues for its many different audiences. It is also important for the BBC, through its international media monitoring operations, to continue to supply the UK with material that enhances understanding of global issues, developments and markets.

**(iii) Broaden UK audiences' experience of and exposure to different cultures from around the world**

Research suggests that audiences wish to see a broad mix of programming. There is a demand for programming that challenges

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<sup>3</sup> Between 2000/01 and 2005 – Factual international programming on UK public service TV 2005, 3WE

<sup>4</sup> BBC Charter Review: 'What You Said About the BBC', DCMS; July 2004

<sup>5</sup> BBC Charter Review: 'What You Said About the BBC', DCMS; July 2004

perceptions, for example that shows the developing world in contexts other than those portrayed in the stereotypes of negative news coverage.<sup>6</sup> In one study three quarters of viewers felt that TV should make us a better society by showing programmes that increase our understanding of each other and the world. The BBC should also bring to its UK audiences high-quality international music, film, arts and other creative work.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reflecting the real world, VSO, IBT CBA, The OU and DID; 2006

<sup>7</sup> Review of public service television broadcasting, Phase 1, Volume 1 – the role of television in society; Audience opinions and research, Ofcom; April 2004