

BBC Asian Network

Part I: Key characteristics of the service

1. Remit

The remit of BBC Asian Network is to provide speech and music output appealing to British Asians, with a strong focus on news and current affairs. It should be primarily in English, but some programming should be provided in a range of South Asian languages.

The primary target audience is British Asians under 35 but the station should also appeal to anyone with an interest in British Asian issues, music and culture.

2. Scope of the Licence

BBC Asian Network should be available every day for general reception in the UK on DAB digital radio, Medium Wave in parts of the country (various frequencies), digital television platforms and it may be simulcast on the internet.

The service may offer its programmes streamed on-demand for a limited period after broadcast.¹ It may also offer broadcast radio content for download for an unlimited period of time after broadcast, although this must not include unabridged readings of published works nor full track commercial music nor classical music (even if recorded by the BBC),² and other interactive station and programme-related content via bbc.co.uk. Broadcast audio programmes may be visually enhanced.³

3. Budget

BBC Asian Network has an annual service budget of £8.7 million.

Any planned or actual change in annual expenditure on the service of more than 10% in real value requires approval from the BBC Trust and may entail variation of this Service Licence. This parameter of change is set to allow variations in spending which arise from regular, cyclical factors such as spending on major sports events, a

¹ BBC Asian Network currently offers a limited amount of mainly speech content on-demand for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast. Any expansion of the scope of this requires the approval of the BBC Trust.

² Download of classical music in the form of incidental music, signature tunes or clips of up to two minutes duration within speech based programmes with a specifically musical theme is permitted

³ This may include video related to output created for BBC broadcast, but should not include the commercial purchase of unrelated video rights.

reasonable level of operational flexibility (e.g. programme scheduling) and changes in accounting policy. Allowing for these factors, the Trust may judge that planned or actual change in annual expenditure of less than 10% should require its approval if the implications of this are significant for the character of the service or its market.

4. Overview of aims and objectives

BBC Asian Network programmes should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: high quality, original, challenging, innovative and engaging, and it should nurture UK talent.

BBC Asian Network should deliver its remit through an approximately 50:50 split of music and speech, with the precise balance varying over the course of the week.

Speech output should include a strong focus on accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs, together with debate, drama, entertainment and sport.

The music played should include a broad range of South Asian-influenced music, with a particular emphasis on new and live music and British Asian artists. During the day an extensive playlist should form the backbone of the schedule, while evening and weekend programmes should focus on more specialised areas.

Language programming should aim to appeal both to people who are fluent and to those who wish to develop their knowledge.

BBC Asian Network should provide high quality content that encourages radio listening via digital platforms, especially among young British Asians. The broadcast output should be supported by a complementary online service with some use of visual enhancements and listeners should be encouraged to interact and communicate with each other and the station. BBC Asian Network should use new technologies to broaden its reach and ensure its audiences have the maximum opportunity to access programmes as and when they want.

BBC Asian Network should contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission some output from independent producers.

Part II: Contribution to public value

5. Contribution to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes

5.1 Sustaining citizenship and civil society

BBC Asian Network should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily through its strong focus on accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs presented in an accessible style for its target audience.

Complex issues should be explained and placed into context to help the audience develop a greater understanding of UK and international events. Listeners should be encouraged to explore a broad range of subjects, to share their experiences, and to be offered regular opportunities to engage in debate. BBC Asian Network should also regularly offer discussion programmes and specially commissioned documentaries providing in-depth analysis on issues relevant to the audience.

Conditions

BBC Asian Network should:

- Ensure that content is approximately 50% speech and 50% music each year

5.2 Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

BBC Asian Network should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by providing a platform for new and established British Asian talent.

In its music output, BBC Asian Network should cover a wide range of genres with an emphasis on new music and on nurturing and developing new acts. Through its broadcasts of live performances it should seek to support and increase the appreciation of live music.

The station should commission radio drama relevant to its audience and encourage new writing, directing, and performing talent.

The station should find and develop new production and presentation talent.

Conditions

BBC Asian Network should:

- Ensure that at least 40% of the music in daytime⁴ is from UK artists. each year
- Contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission at least 10% of eligible hours of output from independent producers

5.3 Reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities

BBC Asian Network should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by responding in its output to the diversity of the UK Asian population in terms of geography, interests, ethnicity, and religion. It should stimulate, support and reflect the diversity of cultural activity in the UK, within the defined scope of the service.

As a UK-wide, rather than local, service it is aimed at the whole UK Asian population, and it should address the needs and interests of a wide range of Asian communities in the UK, giving a broad and fair view of them, reflecting them back to themselves and to the wider community. Its news and current affairs should reflect the voices of the different British Asian communities. Daily phone-ins should seek to encourage debate and reflect opinion from around the UK. Programmes in Hindi/Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Mirpuri and Punjabi, should seek to connect listeners with each other, and with their cultural and linguistic roots.

A broad range of music should be played, encouraging listeners to appreciate music from communities and cultures they may never have come across before. BBC Asian Network's coverage of religion and festivals should aim to put British Asians in touch with each other and with their spiritual roots. The station should also play a role in pan-BBC social action and community campaigns of significance to the BBC Asian Network audience, bringing people together to participate in related programmes and events.

BBC Asian Network's online presence should facilitate and support the growth of communities of interest, providing forums for online communities where they can discuss the news and set their own agenda.

Conditions

BBC Asian Network should:

- Broadcast an average of three to five hours of language programming every day

⁴ Daytime is defined as 06.00–19.00hrs, Monday-Friday and 08.00–14.00hrs, Saturday-Sunday

5.4 Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

BBC Asian Network should contribute to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily by bringing the world to the UK. Its news and current affairs output should regularly cover international events and issues. The station should give the audience the opportunity to debate and share knowledge with people around the world through phone-ins, simulcasts, live link-ups, and use of guests from other countries, as well as through its online communities. The station should regularly use its relationship with communities around the world, particularly in the Indian sub-continent, to help British Asians connect with their roots.

The music played should include international artists. International sports coverage should reflect the particular interests of British Asians.

5.5 Promoting education and learning

BBC Asian Network should play its part in contributing to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily by providing opportunities for informal learning. Its language programming should be aimed at listeners who may speak English as a first language. It should aim to link British Asians with their linguistic roots in an engaging way.

BBC Asian Network should take part in pan-BBC social action and learning initiatives when they are relevant to the station's audience.

5.6 Emerging communications

The BBC's sixth public purpose is defined in the Charter as "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".

BBC Asian Network should contribute to the promotion of this purpose in a variety of ways which are described in this Service Licence.

6. Annexes to this Licence

6.1 Annex I – Performance assessment

The performance of BBC Asian Network will be assessed by the Trust using the framework described in Annex I. BBC Asian Network's compliance with any Conditions, as described in section 5, will also be measured on an annual basis and reported in the Annual Report and Accounts.

The BBC Trust will expect BBC Asian Network to comply with the commitments described in sections 4 and 5 of the Service Licence. The BBC Trust will monitor compliance with these commitments retrospectively as part of its periodic service reviews and/or on an exceptional basis if there is evidence or allegation of non-compliance.

7. Operation of this Service Licence by the BBC Trust

For details of how the BBC Trust operates this Service Licence, please see the Service Licence Operating Framework. This is available from www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust or upon request from the BBC Trust Unit.

Annex I: Performance measurement framework

Introduction

The BBC Trust has the function of assessing the performance of the Executive Board in delivering the BBC's services and activities and holding the Executive Board to account for its performance.⁵ It will use the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of BBC Asian Network.

The framework is based around the four drivers of public value: Reach, Quality, Impact and Value for money and it includes measurement of the five content characteristics, as described in the BBC Agreement⁶: high quality, challenging, original, innovative and engaging.

The Trust can amend this framework without this constituting formal variation to this Service Licence.

Performance measurement framework

Reach: BBC Asian Network should contribute towards the maintenance of combined BBC weekly reach⁷ at over 90% by aiming to increase its own *weekly reach*, particularly amongst its stated target audience.

It should contribute towards on-demand consumption of content. This will be measured by weekly reach of non-DRM audio downloads over the internet.

Quality: audience *approval* of BBC Asian Network and perceptions of it as *high quality* and *innovative*. Also, the proportion of *originated programmes* across all hours⁸

Impact: licence fee payer *awareness* of BBC Asian Network and audience perceptions of BBC Asian Network as *engaging* and *challenging*.

Value for money: BBC Asian Network's *cost per listener hour*.

⁵ Charter, article 24 (c)

⁶ Agreement, clause 14

⁷ For all BBC services

⁸ Including repeats