

BBC WORLD SERVICE LICENCE

The BBC must set and publish a licence for the World Service.¹

The Licence has been agreed by the BBC Board. It defines the characteristics of the World Service, including its remit and scope and how it contributes to the promotion of the BBC's Public Purposes. It also records (a) the objectives, priorities and targets for the World Service, and (b) the languages in which the World Service is to be provided as agreed with the Foreign Secretary.²

The BBC Board will use this Licence as the basis for assessing the performance of the World Service. It will also be used in consideration of any proposed changes to the World Service. The BBC Board is responsible for keeping this Licence under review and for agreeing any changes. The BBC Board will take such steps as it considers appropriate to assess whether any proposed changes are justified.

1. Remit

The World Service broadcasts and distributes news and other content in a range of genres aimed primarily at users outside the UK. It provides services in English and other languages on TV, radio and digital platforms.

The World Service makes a global contribution to the BBC's Mission to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain.³

In particular, the World Service contributes to the BBC's international news mission by seeking to address the global gap in the provision of trusted international news, by providing accurate, impartial and independent news and programming of the highest quality. It should aim to provide a distinctive service tailored to its audience's need, and maximise reach of all services in their target markets, subject to value for money. In doing so, the World Service aims to provide journalism that contributes to accountability and good governance, to improve the welfare and economic development of citizens in developing countries.

The objectives, priorities and targets of the World Service are set out in **SCHEDULE 1**. The list of services provided is contained in **SCHEDULE 2**.

2. Contribution to the promotion of the BBC's Public Purposes

The World Service supports a range of BBC activity but contributes primarily to the BBC's fifth Public Purpose **to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world**.

¹ Clause 34 of the Framework Agreement.

² Clause 34(3) of the Framework Agreement.

³ Article 5 of the Charter.

Fifth Public Purpose

To reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world: the BBC should provide high-quality news coverage to international audiences, firmly based on British values of accuracy, impartiality, and fairness. Its international services should put the United Kingdom in a world context, aiding understanding of the United Kingdom as a whole, including its nations and regions where appropriate. It should ensure that it produces output and services which will be enjoyed by people in the United Kingdom and globally.

In meeting the Public Purposes in accordance with Clause 34(4)(b) of the Framework Agreement the World Service should do the following:

- ensure it provides high-quality news coverage to international audiences, firmly based on British values of accuracy, impartiality, and fairness;
- deliver services that provide audiences with a global perspective on the world, not one based upon any national or commercial interest;
- serve as an independent and trusted guide as access to information grows, helping audiences understand the world around them and make sense of competing views;
- provide a range of content and output across its services to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world, including its Nations and Regions where appropriate, and to place the United Kingdom in a world context;
- provide opportunities for an ongoing global conversation that promotes greater understanding across national boundaries, languages and media;
- enhance the quality and breadth of all BBC output by working with other BBC services to aid international understanding and provide global perspectives; and
- make available to licence fee payers in the UK such of its content as it deems appropriate.

3. Characteristics and scope

The World Service should provide news, current affairs, output in other genres and information services in English and different languages around the world. Services should be made available across a range of different platforms, including radio, television, and digital media, as appropriate, depending on the needs of the target audience and delivering value for money.

All World Service output must meet the BBC's editorial standards as set out in the BBC's Editorial Guidelines⁴ and comply with the provisions of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (No 132, Strasbourg 05/05/1989) ("ECTT")⁵ to the extent required to comply with the United Kingdom's treaty obligations. No activity should damage the editorial integrity of the BBC or bring its brand into disrepute.

The World Service can distribute content provided by or co-produced with the charity BBC Media Action on its services, subject to compliance with the BBC's Editorial Guidelines, the World Service

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/>

⁵ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/112?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=132>

Statement of Policy for Alternative Finance⁶ and all applicable BBC policies and guidelines and any other applicable regulatory requirements.

The services provided by the World Service fall into the following two categories:

- a. English services – The role of English output is to provide a global service, including, but not limited to, the English language international television news service BBC World News, leveraging the BBC’s strengths in the most widely understood language in the world, showcasing the best of the BBC’s international journalism and aiding understanding of the United Kingdom in a world context.
- b. Language services – The role of Language output is to target specific areas where there is a gap or shortfall in the provision of high quality international news, by delivering services to audiences in specific vernacular languages.

The World Service should respond to the needs and consumption habits of audiences in target markets. Where possible, the World Service should ensure that it is available on the most appropriate platform for its audience. The World Service should also seek to innovate in order to reach audiences in the most effective manner where appropriate.

Taking account of the strategy and the budget it has set, the BBC must agree with the Foreign Secretary the languages in which the World Service is to be provided. The list of Language services provided is outlined in **SCHEDULE 2**.

Conditions:

The World Service should provide a variety of content in order to inform, educate and entertain its audiences.

The World Service should provide services in 41 languages.

BBC World Service should ensure that its output comprises predominately news, current affairs and information programming. In specific cases a broader mix of output may be more appropriate and should be clearly identified as such.

BBC World Service output should be made available to audiences in the UK where appropriate.

4. BBC World Service prioritisation

The BBC must determine the most effective way of delivering the Remit, and the objectives, priorities and targets, of the World Service.

In determining the approach to service and language prioritisation, the World Service will take account of the following factors in line with its Remit to address the shortfall in trusted news:

⁶ The World Service Policy for sources of finance other than the Licence Fee (“Alternative Finance”) see http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/partnerships_and_finance.html

- a) The audience need for trusted news, such as the existence of a current or growing shortfall in the supply of independent and impartial news and information that is impacting on the market or region. This could also include a sudden change in a market leading to an increased shortfall;
- b) The BBC's ability to provide a distinctive and compelling content offer tailored to audience needs;
- c) The projected impact of the service, including the BBC's ability to reach a significant segment of the target audience; and
- d) The cost effectiveness of a service and the ability to deliver value for money. In general we would expect services or platforms to be in line with the average cost per user ratio for similar services on similar distribution platforms.

No single factor will be considered more important than another and all the criteria should be taken into account to create an overall assessment.

These criteria will be used by the BBC to assess whether or not to launch a service in a new language. The factors will also be taken into account when deciding to cease providing an existing service, for example in response to market changes or budget reallocation.⁷

5. Performance assessment and the reviews of the World Service

The performance of the World Service will be assessed by the BBC, reported on in its annual report and reviewed by the Chair of the BBC Board and the Foreign Secretary (or their nominated representatives) at least annually. The review should include a discussion of a written report from the BBC on the performance of the Service against the objectives, priorities and targets and give consideration to whether they should be changed. BBC World Service's compliance with any conditions will also be measured on an annual basis.

An assessment of the World Service's performance against the requirements of this Licence will be published on an annual basis. Details of the future plans for the World Service will also be included in the BBC's published annual content plan⁸.

The BBC will review the World Service as a whole at least once every five years from the Effective Date of the BBC Charter, considering in particular the performance of the World Service in delivering the requirements set out in this Licence. The BBC may decide to conduct more frequent reviews of particular aspects of the World Service. The BBC will publish the findings of any review(s) conducted. In conducting reviews the BBC will take appropriate account of the views of the public in the United Kingdom and of people across the world who make up the actual or intended audience of the World Service.

6. Budget

⁷ The objectives, priorities and targets of the World Service, and the languages in which it is provided, are subject to agreement with the Foreign Secretary.

⁸ Article 36 of the Charter.

The budget for the World Service must be at least £254 million for each of the financial years from 2017/18 to 2021/22.⁹ This includes spending on content, distribution and capital. Details of spending will be published in the BBC's Annual Report and Accounts.

In addition, aspects of the World Service (whether entire language services or enhancements to services otherwise funded by the licence fee) may be funded by a grant from the UK Government to undertake particular defined projects connected with the World Service as set out in Clause 36 of the Framework Agreement. The projects are provided subject to the continuation of such grant funding.

The acceptance and use of such funding is subject to an agreement with the UK Government. **SCHEDULE 4** of this Licence records the details of projects funded under Clause 36 at any given time.

The World Service should continue to seek alternative sources of funding, including from limited permitted commercial activity, in accordance with the requirements of Clause 49 of the Framework Agreement and the World Service Statement of Policy for Alternative Finance¹⁰, where this does not impinge on delivery of its Remit and is within regulatory requirements.

7. Changes to this licence

Over time it is expected that the World Service will need to change in order to meet its objectives, priorities and targets. It is also important that the World Service can respond in an agile manner to events and the needs of audiences as they change around the world.

Any changes to this Licence must be approved by the BBC Board. In considering changes the BBC Board may take account of a range of factors, depending on the potential significance of the proposed change.

The BBC Board recognises that some factors may be outside of the control of the World Service, for example changes in the security or regulatory situation which disrupt the ability of the BBC to operate in specific territories. The BBC Board would not expect to update the Licence in such cases, unless this was considered to be a permanent change.

Any change to the languages provided, including the start of a new service in a language not currently served or ceasing entirely to provide services in a particular language must be agreed with the Foreign Secretary.¹¹

Any changes to the objectives, priorities and targets must be agreed with the Foreign Secretary.

⁹ Clause 33 of the Framework Agreement.

¹⁰ The World Service Policy for sources of finance other than the Licence Fee ("Alternative Finance") see http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/partnerships_and_finance.html

¹¹ Clause 33.(6) of the Framework Agreement. Separate requirements apply in relation to activity funded under Clause 36 of the Framework Agreement.

SCHEDULE 1

Objectives, priorities and targets

The BBC must agree “objectives, priorities and targets” for the World Service with the Foreign Secretary.¹² Without limiting the ability of the BBC and the Foreign Secretary to agree other objectives, the objectives for the World Service must contribute to the fulfilment of the Mission and the promotion of the Public Purposes including providing high-quality news coverage, current affairs and factual programming to international audiences, firmly based on British values of accuracy, impartiality, and fairness.

For these purposes

- a. an “objective” is a medium- to long-term ambition for the World Service, expressed in general terms and it should relate to the World Service’s provision of trusted news, fulfilment of its Remit and promotion of the Public Purposes;
- b. a “priority” is an expression of the relative importance of the objectives;
- c. a “target” is a measurable criterion of the public value delivered by the World Service (based, in particular, on the reach, quality, impact and value for money that it achieves), which must be consistent with the objectives and priorities set for the Service.

Objectives, Priorities and Targets for the World Service as agreed between the BBC and the Foreign Secretary

	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITIES by 2022/23	TARGETS by 2022/23
1	<p>To maximise the reach of all language services in line with its Remit and subject to value for money</p> <p>(Reach)</p>	<p>The objective to extend reach is aligned with objectives 2 and 3 which address Quality and Impact. They are underpinned by objective 4 (Value for money) which is essential for the effective delivery of all objectives.</p> <p>Key elements of importance of Reach include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Language services to be agile and flexible, able to respond and adapt quickly to changes brought about by world events, media market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total reach: from 269m to 364m (up by 35%)¹³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TV: from 110m to 140m (up by 27%) ○ Audio: from 155m to 160m (up by 3%) ○ Digital: from 38m to 104m (up by 173%)¹⁴ • Increase reach in the following segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Women: from 43% to 48% ○ Young (15 – 24): from 22% to 27%

¹² Framework Agreement Clause 33.(6).

¹³ To be assessed against the following annual milestones towards the target: 2018: 280m; 2019: 304m; 2020: 330m; 2021: 305m; 2022: 364m.

¹⁴ Annual breakdown of reach for digital and other platforms by language service to be published for detailed assessment. See 4. Targets (Value).

		<p>conditions and changing consumption habits in order to maintain audience levels.</p> <p>b. Using insight to target important demographics such as opinion formers and particularly under-served groups such as the younger generation and women.</p>	
2	<p>To be the world’s most trusted provider of accurate and independent international news and current affairs</p> <p>(Quality)</p>	<p>This objective is aligned with objectives 1 and 3 which address reach and impact. They are underpinned by objective 4 (Value for money) which is essential for the effective delivery of all objectives.</p> <p>Key to the importance of Quality is that the BBC World Service should actively sustain its strong reputation as the most trusted international news provider globally and aim to be one of the most trusted news providers in countries where it operates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC to be rated higher than relevant international news competitors¹⁵ for the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reliable ○ Trustworthy ○ Independent
3	<p>To provide accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs covering international and national developments, so that its audiences can engage in democratic processes as informed citizens, and to reflect the United Kingdom, its</p>	<p>This objective is aligned with objectives 1 and 2 which address Reach and Quality. They are underpinned by objective 4 (Value for money) which is essential for the effective delivery of all objectives.</p> <p>Key to the importance of Impact will be creating content that:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC to be rated higher than international news competitors for range of audience indicators on understanding of world events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Helps me gain a more in-depth understanding” ○ “Informs my world view”

¹⁵ The relevant competitor set for the BBC World Service consists of other global, international news providers with similar scope, budget and size. The set, which is not exhaustive or exclusive, and which will depend to a degree from market to market, includes in most markets international news providers such as BBS, DW, FMM, etc.

	<p>culture and values to the world</p> <p>(Impact)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Informs, inspires and engages its audiences. b. Places the UK in a world context, aiding understanding of the UK and its nations and regions where appropriate. c. Contributes to good governance and accountability by supporting informed, balanced public debate that helps audiences understand the world around them and make sense of competing views, including where there is a shortfall of high-quality news. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o “Helps me to understand what is essential to know, even if it’s not of interest to me”
4	<p>To demonstrate value for money, transparency and seek alternative sources of funding where appropriate and in line with its remit</p> <p>(Value)</p>	<p>This objective underpins the effective delivery of all objectives.</p> <p>Key to the importance of Value for Money is that the BBC World Service should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure value for money in the provision of services. b. Publish a range of performance measures and information on the World Service for public scrutiny and in line with the Charter obligations to demonstrate the value it delivers. c. Seek appropriate opportunities to access other sources of income, where this does not impinge on delivery of the BBC World Service’s remit, is within regulatory requirements, and is mindful of local market impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake regular annual and all other reviews as stated in the Framework Agreement to assess the efficiency of provision of services, value for money and infrastructure requirements of the World Service, where and when appropriate benchmarking against similar international news competitors. • Publish annual performance measures and information for the World Service. For digital reach this will be for each individual language service as well as overall. The possibility of publishing similar language service data for other platforms will be kept under review, subject to availability of data and proportionality of approach. • Report annually on funding, including alternative sources of income.

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Reporting and Review

The BBC will report annually against the objectives, priorities and targets agreed between the Foreign Secretary and the BBC Board. This will include assessment of progress against quantitative targets.

The Foreign Secretary and the BBC Chair (or their nominated representatives) will meet annually to discuss the services, review the performance report, and consider any adjustments that need to be made, including targets. If both parties agree they may also consider adjustments to services outside this timing, in response to significant changes in market conditions or world events. The BBC World Service Group Director and FCO Director of Communication shall also meet regularly and in any event not less than once every six months to discuss performance and any other issues as necessary.

SCHEDULE 2

List of services and target audience

Language Service	Remit	Aims
Global English		
World Service English <i>(including, but not limited to, the English language international TV news service currently known as BBC World News).</i>	Should be available to English speaking audiences around the world, via audio and online and may be made available on TV.	Should aim to meet the needs of English-speaking audiences interested in a global perspective on international news and current affairs, in-depth analysis on global issues and wider mix of genres offering inspiring and thought-provoking programming.
Languages		
Arabic	Should be available to Arabic speaking audiences around the world, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, via a 24 hours TV channel, audio and online.	Should aim to meet the needs of Arabic speaking audiences interested in mix of domestic and international news and current affairs, together with other genres such as debate, arts, business, technology and sport programming.
Azeri	Should be available to audiences in Azerbaijan and Azeri speakers around the world as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Azeri speakers by providing a mix of local news from a global perspective and international news and current affairs.
Bengali	Should be available to audiences in Bangladesh, India and neighbouring countries on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Bengali speakers interested in local news from a global perspective and international news and current affairs
Burmese	Should be available to audiences in Burma and be available to Burmese speakers around the world on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Burmese speakers by providing a mix of local news from a global perspective and international news and current affairs.
Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese)	Should be available to audiences in mainland China, Hong-Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese speaking audiences around the world as an online and audio service (in Cantonese only).	Should aim to meet the needs of Chinese speaking audiences around the world interested in in-depth news and analysis about global issues, modern China and other genres such as education, technology, science, entertainment and sport.

French for Africa	Should be available to Francophone audiences in Africa on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of French speakers of Africa by providing a mix of local news from a global perspective and international news and current affairs.
Hausa	Should be available to Hausa speaking audiences in Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Chad, Sierra Leone and Hausa speakers around the world on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Hausa speaking audiences interested in a mix of local news and international and current affairs and analysis, as well as other genres such as sports programming.
Hindi	Should be available to Hindi speaking audiences in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Hindi speakers around the world on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Hindi speaking audiences interested in international news, news about India and a global perspective on India related stories.
Indonesian	Should be available to audiences in Indonesia and Indonesian speaking audiences around the world on audio and online.	Should aim to meet the needs of Indonesian-speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs from a global perspective.
Kinyarwanda / Kirundi	Should be available to Kinyarwanda / Kirundi speaking audiences in Rwanda and Burundi, and the wider Great Lakes region on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Kinyarwanda / Kirundi speakers by providing a mix of local news from a global perspective and international news and current affairs.
Kyrgyz	Should be available to audiences in Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz speaking audiences around the world TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Kyrgyz speakers by providing a global perspective on international news and current affairs.
Nepali	Should be available to audiences in Nepal and Nepali speakers in neighbouring countries on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Nepali speakers interested in regional and international news and current affairs.
Pashto and Dari	Should be available to audiences in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Pashto and Dari speakers around the world on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Pashto and Dari speakers with the mix of local news on Afghanistan and Pakistan from a global perspective as well as and international news and current affairs.

Persian	Should be available to audiences in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan and Persian speakers around the world on TV, audio and online.	Should aim to meet the needs of Persian speaking audiences interested in mix of domestic and international news and current affairs, together with other genres.
Portuguese for Brazil	Should be available to audiences in Brazil, and Portuguese speakers around the world as an online service.	Should aim to meet the needs of Portuguese speakers with an interest in analysis of international news and current affairs and other genres such as health, technology, and science.
Russian	Should be available to audiences in Russia, and Former Soviet Union countries on TV and online.	Should meet the needs of Russian speaking audiences interested in international news, news about Russia and a global perspective on Russia-related stories. Also, provide a richer mix of BBC produced content designed to engage underserved audiences in target area.
Sinhala	Should be available to Sinhala speaking audiences in Sri Lanka and around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Sinhalese speakers interested in international news and news about Sri Lanka and wider region from a global perspective.
Somali	Should be available to Somali speaking audiences in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya and neighbouring countries on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Somali speakers with the mix of local, regional and international news.
Spanish	Should be available to Spanish speakers in Latin America, and diaspora audiences in the US as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Spanish speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs and global issues affecting Latin America.
Swahili	Should be available to Swahili speakers, particularly in Kenya, Tanzania, eastern DRC and Uganda on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Swahili speaking audiences interested in a mix of local news and international and current affairs and analysis, as well as other genres such as sports programming.
Tamil	Should be available to Tamil-speaking audiences in India and around the	Should meet the needs of Tamil speaking audiences interested in

	world on TV, audio and online.	international news and current affairs.
Turkish	Should be available to audiences in Turkey, and Turkish speakers around the world as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Turkish speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs.
Ukrainian	Should be available to audiences in Ukraine, and Ukrainian speaking diaspora audiences around the world as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Ukrainian speaking audiences with an interest in international news and current affairs.
Urdu	Should target Urdu speaking audiences in Pakistan, India and Nepal and be available to Urdu-speakers around the world on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Urdu speaking audiences with the mix of local and international news, news about Pakistan and a global perspective on Pakistan related stories.
Uzbek	Should be available to Uzbek speaking audiences in Uzbekistan and Afghanistan on TV, audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Uzbek speakers with interest in international news and current affairs.
Vietnamese	Should be available to audiences in Vietnam and be available to Vietnamese speakers around the world as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Vietnamese speakers with interest in international news and current affairs.
Thai	Should be available to audiences in Thailand and Thai speakers around the world as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Thai speaking audiences with interest in international news and current affairs.
Amharic	Should be available to audiences in Ethiopia and Amharic speakers around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Amharic speakers with the mix of local and international news.
Afaan Oromo	Should be available to audiences in Ethiopia and Afaan Oromo speakers around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Oromo speakers with the mix of local and international news.

Tigrinya	Should be available to audiences in Eritrea and Tigrinya speakers around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Tigrinya speakers with the mix of local and international news.
Yoruba	Should be available to Yoruba speakers in Nigeria and around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Yoruba speakers with the mix of local and international news.
Igbo	Should be available to Igbo speakers in Nigeria and around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Igbo speakers with the mix of local and international news.
Pidgin	Should be available to Pidgin speakers in Nigeria and around the world on radio and online.	Should meet the needs of Pidgin speakers with mix of local and international news.
Gujarati	Should be available to Gujarati speakers in India and around the world on TV and online.	Should meet the needs of Gujarati speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs.
Marathi	Should be available to Marathi speakers in India and around the world on TV an online.	Should meet the needs of Marathi speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs.
Telugu	Should be available to Telugu speakers in India and around the world on TV and online.	Should meet the needs of Telugu speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs.
Punjabi	Should be available to Punjabi speakers in India and around the world on TV and online.	Should meet the needs of Punjabi speaking audiences interested in international news and current affairs.
Korean	Should be available to audiences in Korean peninsula and Korean speakers around the world on audio and online.	Should meet the needs of Korean speaking audiences interested in mix of local and international news and current affairs.
Serbian	Should be available to audiences in Serbia and Serbian speakers around the world as an online service.	Should meet the needs of Serbian speaking audiences interested in mix of local, regional and international news and current affairs.