

BBC protocol

C5 – BBC Monitoring

March 2013

BBC Monitoring

What is a protocol?

'Protocols' are formal documents which set out how the BBC Trust will carry out its functions as required by the BBC's Royal Charter and Framework Agreement. Protocols set out the Trust's processes, and the respective roles and responsibilities of the BBC Trust and the BBC Executive Board.

The Charter and Agreement

The Royal Charter is the constitutional basis for the BBC. It sets out the public purposes of the BBC, guarantees its independence, and outlines the duties of the BBC Trust and the BBC Executive Board.

The Agreement sits alongside the BBC's Royal Charter. It provides detail on many of the topics outlined in the Charter and also covers the BBC's funding and its regulatory duties.

What this protocol is about

This protocol outlines the different responsibilities of the BBC Trust and the BBC Executive Board with regard to BBC Monitoring.

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BBC Monitoring

Approach and principles

- 1.1 BBC Monitoring consists of the monitoring (and where applicable, recording) of media output that is openly available from around the world and includes the provision of related services such as the preparation and distribution, usually in electronic form, of products such as reports and digests of international news, comment and other information. It is provided in the public interest and for the benefit of users, including—
 - (a) contributing to the provision of news in the BBC's services, and
 - (b) providing monitoring services to the UK Government and other public authorities.
- 1.2 BBC Monitoring is provided in accordance with a governing scheme agreed¹ between the BBC and certain of its stakeholders, namely, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Defence and the security and intelligence Agencies (referred to in this Protocol as "the relevant stakeholders").
- 1.3 The BBC retains full editorial and managerial independence and integrity in the provision of BBC Monitoring.
- 1.4 As far as is relevant, the editorial standards and guidelines that apply to the BBC's UK Public Services apply equally to BBC Monitoring.
- 1.5 BBC Monitoring must abide by the BBC's fair trading regime and is for that purpose a public service activity.

Role and duties of the BBC Trust

- 2.1 The governing scheme must make provision (amongst other things) for the BBC Trust to be responsible—
 - (a) when setting the overall strategic direction of the BBC, for defining the position of BBC Monitoring within that strategy; and
 - (b) for approving the high-level strategy for BBC Monitoring, and the budget for the core services (as defined in the governing scheme).
- 2.2 Accordingly,² as part of the annual process for the approval of the BBC's high-level budgets³ the Trust will approve both—
 - (a) high-level multi-year financial strategies for BBC Monitoring, and

¹ The current governing scheme was agreed on 21 March 2013 and takes effect on 1 April 2013.

² See the current governing scheme, Section 14.

³ See Section B of Protocol B1.

- (b) annual financial allocations for BBC Monitoring, which must be clearly-identifiable and separate, and which, once approved, can neither be increased nor decreased without the approval of the Trust.
- 2.3 The BBC Trust must set the framework by which it will ensure editorial integrity in the provision of BBC Monitoring. In doing so, the BBC Trust will have regard to the particular requirements that apply to the UK Public Services.⁴
- 2.4 The BBC Trust has overall responsibility for the stewardship of all funds provided to the BBC for the provision of BBC Monitoring.
- 2.5 The Trust, normally through its International Services Committee ("ISC"), will consider (and note) the report of the stakeholders' Monitoring Consultative Group six-monthly evaluation of BBC Monitoring's performance and services. Such consideration of the report will be based on a written commentary submitted in advance of the relevant meeting.
- 2.6 At least once a year, the ISC will invite the relevant stakeholders to send one or more representatives to attend one of its scheduled meetings to discuss the performance of BBC Monitoring. The ISC may (but need not) also invite senior representatives of the Executive to attend.
- 2.7 Disputes between BBC Monitoring and one or more relevant stakeholders that cannot be resolved by the Monitoring Working Group or the Monitoring Consultative Group⁵ may be referred to the Trust for resolution. These will normally be decided by the ISC. The Trust (including the ISC) is the final arbiter of any question as to whether a dispute falls to be resolved at Trust level.
- 2.8 The BBC Trust will make an annual assessment of the performance of BBC Monitoring in Part One of the Annual Report and Accounts (usually published in July).
- 2.9 Any governing scheme, or any changes of substance to such a scheme, must be approved by the Trust before being agreed with the relevant stakeholders. Any other changes must be notified to the Trust before they take effect.

Role and duties of the BBC Executive Board

- 3.1 The Executive Board has operational responsibility for the provision of BBC Monitoring in accordance with the Agreement and the governing scheme that has effect at any time.
- 3.2 The Executive Board is responsible for-
 - (a) negotiating the governing scheme or any changes to an existing one;
 - (b) presenting to the Trust for approval the draft scheme or any change to an existing scheme, unless the change relates solely to an operational or editorial issue (an example of a change that does not need approval being a change to country priorities or the delivery of new products or services on a continuing basis); and
 - (c) notifying any other changes to the Trust before they take effect.

⁴ BBC Agreement Clause 64D(7)

⁵ See Section 17 of the current governing scheme.

- 3.3 The Executive Board will develop a draft high-level strategy for BBC Monitoring which it will present to the Trust for its consideration and (if satisfied) approval.
- 3.4 The Executive Board is responsible for the timely submission of papers relating to Trust or ISC consideration of any matters within the Trust's remit relating to the provision of BBC Monitoring or the assessment of its performance.
- 3.5 In particular, a draft high-level strategy for BBC Monitoring, and any changes to an approved strategy, should be submitted for consideration no later than six months before it is proposed to take effect (unless an alternative timetable is agreed with the Trust Unit).
- 3.6 The Executive Board will, at least annually, present to the BBC Trust (or ISC) an assessment of the performance of the BBC Monitoring.

Outputs and timings

- 4.1 This section sets out a summary of the key outputs for this protocol.
 - (a) a governing scheme
 - (b) high-level multi-year financial strategies for BBC Monitoring
 - (c) annual financial allocations for BBC Monitoring
 - (d) report of the stakeholders' Monitoring Consultative Group six-monthly evaluation of BBC Monitoring's performance and services
 - (e) the Executive Board's assessment of the performance of the BBC Monitoring.

References

5.1 BBC Charter

The following article in the BBC's Charter is relevant to this protocol:

- (a) BBC Charter Article 4 – the BBC's public purposes.

5.2 BBC Framework Agreement

The following Clause in the BBC Framework Agreement is relevant to this protocol:

- (a) BBC Agreement Clause 64D – BBC Monitoring.

5.3 Other documents

The following other document is relevant to this protocol:

- (a) The Scheme agreed between the BBC and relevant stakeholders of BBC Monitoring on 21 March 2013.

Version	Date of publication	Approved by the Trust	Summary of changes since previous version
v.1	January 2013	22 November 2012	n/a
v.2	March 2013	n/a	Effective date for the Scheme inserted at 5.3