

## BBC Alba

**This service licence** describes the most important characteristics of BBC Alba, including how it contributes to the BBC's public purposes. Service Licences are the core of the BBC's governance system. They aim to provide certainty for audiences and stakeholders about what each BBC service should provide.

The Trust uses service licences as the basis for its performance assessment and as the basis for its consideration of any proposals for change to the UK public services from the BBC Executive. A service may not change in a way that breaches its service licence without Trust approval. The Trust presumes that any proposed change to a stated Key Characteristic of a licence will require it to undertake a Public Value Test. Should it decide not to carry out a Public Value Test before approving any such change, then it must publish its reasons in full.

This Service Licence covers the television output of the BBC ALBA service operated in partnership with MG ALBA. BBC Gaelic radio is covered by the Radio nan Gàidheal Service Licence, and online activities are covered by the BBC Online Service Licence.

### **Part I: Key characteristics of the service**

#### **1. Remit**

The remit of BBC Alba is to offer a mix of genres, including television news and weather. It should aim to serve Gaelic speakers, those learning the language, those that might wish to learn, and those interested in the language and culture. It should aim to reflect and support Gaelic culture, identity and heritage.

#### **2. Scope of this Licence**

BBC Alba should be available for around seven hours each day. It should be transmitted free to air for general reception in the UK as a live broadcast on digital television platforms and it may be simulcast on fixed and mobile internet protocol networks.

It may also offer its broadcast content on fixed and mobile internet protocol networks or via other platforms<sup>1</sup> for 30 days after it has been broadcast. On the same platforms, it may allow users prospectively via pre-booking to download multiple episodes of a series.

BBC Alba should offer programme-related content on [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Trust's Syndication Policy for BBC on-demand content.

<sup>2</sup> This includes the offer of some news and current affairs output on-demand for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast. Any expansion of this offering will require the approval of the BBC Trust

Should at any time MG Alba withdraw from its partnership with the BBC or fail to provide agreed funding for the service, then approval for the service will be withdrawn and this licence will be revoked.

### **3. Service budget**

BBC Alba is funded jointly by the BBC and by MG Alba. The BBC's contribution to BBC Alba's budget, as covered by this Service Licence, is £5.7 million in 2016/17.

The BBC's contribution to this budget may be adjusted annually for Retail Price Inflation. Any planned or actual change in the BBC's annual expenditure on the service of more than 10 per cent in real value requires approval from the BBC Trust and may entail variation of this Service Licence. The Trust's approval will also be required if total funding of MG Alba changes by more than 10 per cent in real value.

### **4. Overview of aims and objectives**

Programmes on BBC Alba should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: high quality, original, challenging, innovative and engaging, and they should nurture UK talent.

The service should deliver its remit through high-quality programmes with wide appeal across a range of genres. It should show some originated television programming, including output first shown on other BBC services. BBC Alba should commission original programming across a range of genres, including news, weather, sports, live events, children's, music and entertainment, factual programming, educational output and some comedy and drama.

Its news and current affairs output should be accurate, impartial and independent.

BBC Alba should support Scottish and Gaelic music and arts, and should represent the BBC's main outlet for events of particular significance to Gaelic speakers. It should commission work from new and established talent.

When the television service is not being transmitted, BBC Alba may simulcast BBC Radio nan Gàidheal.

BBC Alba is committed to commissioning output from independent suppliers, in accordance with the BBC's statutory commitments.

## **Part II: Contribution to public value**

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

#### **5.1 Reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities**

BBC Alba should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by reflecting and strengthening Gaelic cultural heritage and promoting awareness of it across the UK.

It should do so by its provision of output in the Gaelic language for those who speak the language, and by its role in encouraging and enabling others to learn Gaelic. BBC Alba is aimed primarily at Gaelic speakers within Scotland, although it should also be available on some platforms to those outside Scotland.

It should achieve these aims across all types of programming. In particular, its factual output should reflect topics of interest and relevance to the Gaelic community. In addition, religious and sports programming should represent the diversity of interests within the Gaelic community. It should aim to draw the Gaelic community together to share sporting, cultural and musical occasions.

#### **5.2 Promoting education and learning**

BBC Alba should make an important contribution to this purpose by offering regular support to those learning the Gaelic language with its programming, and by offering learning resources alongside its programming, including subtitles and additional online content. It should work with external partners in the Gaelic education sector to promote learning of the Gaelic language.

BBC Alba should offer programming for both pre-school and older children in regular slots each week.

BBC Alba should provide opportunities for informal learning across a wide range of subjects in its factual output. It may take part in pan-BBC learning campaigns, adapting them where necessary to enhance their appeal to Gaelic-speaking audiences.

#### **Conditions**

BBC Alba should:

- Broadcast around 5 hours of originated programming (excluding news) each week, including programming first shown on other BBC services. At least 2 hours per week of all originated programming should be aimed at those learning the Gaelic language.

### 5.3 Sustaining citizenship and civil society

BBC Alba should contribute to this purpose amongst its audience through its provision of accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs shown in peak viewing times.

It should broadcast live news programmes each weekday evening, including at peaktime, and a longer news review at weekends.

It should aim to originate some news material itself, as well as providing re-versioned news content gathered by the BBC elsewhere.

Its journalism should focus on issues of relevance to the Gaelic speaking target audience. Political coverage, including coverage of elections, should focus on Scottish affairs, but also cover the Westminster and European parliaments, as appropriate. The service should enable audiences and experts to explore a broad range of subjects and to engage and interact on these issues.

Some content should be made available for on-demand viewing online after broadcast.

#### Conditions

BBC Alba should:

- Broadcast live news programmes each weekday evening, including at peak time, and a longer news review at weekends.

### 5.4 Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

BBC Alba should contribute to this purpose amongst its audience, both by supporting established talent and by developing new talent. It should contribute to the creative economy in Scotland by commissioning programming from independent suppliers.

The service should support Scottish music and arts by broadcasting a range of styles of music-making and other performance, including traditional and contemporary music.

BBC Alba should commission some original comedy and drama each year.

#### Conditions

BBC Alba should:

- Commission at least 50 per cent by volume of its original programming (excluding news) from independent producers.

### **5.5 Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK**

BBC Alba should play its part in this purpose, primarily by bringing the world to the UK, by regularly covering international events and issues in Gaelic, and through its news output. It should bring the Scottish Gaelic community to the world by making Gaelic language content available on BBC Online.

### **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 Alba 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 Alba will be assessed by the BBC Trust using the framework described in Annex I. BBC Alba'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 Alba 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.

### **6.2. Annex II - Statutory commitments**

Details of statutory quotas and other obligations to be fulfilled by BBC Alba, in conjunction with other BBC services, are set out in Service Licence Annex II.

## **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.<sup>3</sup> It will use the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of BBC Alba.

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 Agreement<sup>4</sup>: 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**

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.<sup>5</sup> It uses the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of BBC Alba.

The framework uses a range of metrics based around the four drivers of public value:

- Quality
- Reach
- Impact
- Value for money.

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

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<sup>3</sup> Charter, article 24 (c)

<sup>4</sup> Agreement, clause 14

<sup>5</sup> Charter, article 24 (c)

## **Annex II: Statutory commitments**

In addition to the conditions and commitments described in this Service Licence, BBC Alba contributes to the fulfilment of a statutory commitment each calendar year.

- A minimum percentage of qualifying hours to be provided by independent producers

The exact level of this annual commitment is published by the BBC in its Statement of Programme Policy each year.