# FACTUAL COMMISSIONING ROUND
## SPRING 2016

Proteus round: 2017 2018 – 1

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# 1. TIMETABLE

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<tr>
<td>Week commencing 15(^{th}) February</td>
<td>Factual guidelines published on the Radio 4 website</td>
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<td>23(^{rd}) February</td>
<td>Briefing for factual producers in Broadcasting House, London</td>
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<td>Briefing for factual producers in MediaCityUK, Salford</td>
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<td>24(^{th}) March – 12 noon</td>
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<td>Factual commissioning results published in Proteus</td>
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**IMPORTANT NOTE**

These guidelines and commissioning timetable apply to the factual commissioning round only.
2. HOW TO SUBMIT AN IDEA TO RADIO 4

This round is open to all BBC departments and registered independent companies with the necessary expertise. Do not offer proposals unless you can demonstrate that you have this expertise.

Pre-offers

This first stage of the round invites you to submit very brief outlines of your ideas. They will be sifted by the commissioning team who will shortlist those they think most worth developing for the final offers stage.

All ideas must be entered in Proteus by the stated deadline. We do not require hard copies of any proposal.

Enter in: Radio 4  Round 2017 2018 - 1

For pre-offers we require only the minimum information to enable short-listing.

The following must be entered for each proposal:

- **title** (of your proposal, not the slot)
- **commissioning brief number** Enter each proposal in one schedule slot only. If we consider it suitable for another slot, we will transfer it.
- **delivery date** Enter an estimated delivery date e.g. 01/03/2017
- **number of episodes**
- **duration.** This is the total allotted airtime, including continuity announcements, for example 14’ and 28’.
- **short synopsis:** maximum 200 words
- **Price per episode** This information is managed by us. The guide prices quoted in these guidelines is – with only the rarest exceptions – the maximum we will pay.
- **Long synopsis** Do not enter anything in the field at this stage. It will not be read.

When the commissioning editor has read all pre-offers and selected those he thinks worth further development, we release the results in Proteus. Proposals will show as either ‘rejected’ or ‘re-requested’.

If your offer is ‘re-requested’, this means we want to consider it in the final offers stage. You are invited to discuss short-listed ideas with the commissioning editor. Time pressures may require this to be by phone rather than face to face.

A proposal re-requested in pre-offers should not be set up from scratch, just edited to reflect the fuller requirements for the final offers stage (see below).

Owing to the large number of submissions at this stage, we are unable to provide feedback on rejected pre-offers.
Final offers

Following conversations with the commissioning editor, the ideas you develop for final submission should be entered in Proteus. Generally, final submissions will be those which we “re-requested” at the pre-offers stage.

It is also possible to submit fresh offers which have not been discussed, but please be aware that the earlier you get on the radar of the commissioning editor the better. Experience shows that very few offers that haven’t been pre-offered get commissions.

All proposals must be delivered in Proteus by the deadline.

Enter in: Radio 4   Round 2017 2018 - 1

In each commissioning brief there is an indication of the kind of track record we require in suppliers to that slot. Do not offer proposals unless you can demonstrate the necessary expertise.

Be realistic in the number of proposals you submit, in view of the number of programmes available, and observing the cap where this has been applied. If the cap says a maximum 10 proposals per supplier, we will only read your first 10. Fewer, stronger ideas are much more likely to get through. In slots where each commission is for multiple episodes, the number of commissions will be far fewer than the number of individual programmes available.

The following must be submitted for each proposal:

- **title** If your idea is commissioned you must not subsequently change this title without the written agreement of the commissioning editor.
- **commissioning brief number** Submit each proposal in one slot only. If we think it suitable for another slot, we will transfer it.
- **achievable delivery date** (linked to anniversary / event dates where relevant). This information will be used when scheduling a commissioned programme.
- **price per episode** Radio 4 has set prices that it expects to pay for programmes, as shown at the top of each commissioning brief. This is entered automatically in the guide price field. If your idea requires a budget significantly above or below the guide price, make this clear in the long synopsis and explain your reasoning. Although ideas submitted below the guide may increase your chance of a commission, the editorial proposition is always paramount in commissioning decisions.
- **producer**
- **executive producer** Include a CV in long synopsis field if the exec is new to Radio 4.
- **number of episodes**
- **duration** This is the total allotted airtime, including continuity announcements, for example 14’ and 28’.
- **the short synopsis for the final proposal must be under 50 words. It should convey the essence of the programme. Think of it as a fledgling Radio Times Billing.**
the long synopsis must not exceed 2 x A4 pages of size 11 type.

key talent Any intended writer/abridger/performer/presenter etc. should be shown in the long synopsis. You do not have to secure talent agreement before submitting an offer but you should let us know the degree to which named talent have expressed an interest in the project or have intellectual ownership of it.

Style guide

- Don’t use the Notes field. Anything in this field will be deleted.
- Don’t insert a space or dots or asterisks before beginning the title.
- Don’t put double spaces in the title.
- Don’t put quotation marks around the title.
- Don’t start the title with a slot name, e.g. The Wednesday Debate.
- Do begin titles in Proteus with The or A as appropriate, e.g. A Short History of…
- If you are preparing proposals offline to cut and paste into Proteus, keep formatting simple: bold, underline and italic only. Proteus will remove other formatting, including bulleted and numbered points, as well as converting your font to the equivalent of Arial size 11.

Results

Results will be released in Proteus. We do not send out hard copies.

Proteus will display one of five standard responses to each offer:

- rejection
- shortlist
- pilot
- conditional commission

Rejection

We will provide brief feedback on our reasons for not commissioning a proposal.

Shortlist

Shortlisting happens for 3 principal reasons:

- We are seriously interested in the idea but feel more work is needed. In this case, the commissioning editor will be in touch to explain what we are looking for.
- Competing offers delay the commissioning decision. We need more information before deciding between them.
- We do not have space to commission the idea but want to keep it in reserve in case gaps appear in the schedule later.

We try to clear proposals from the shortlist quickly and we review it every 3 months or so to see whether we are in a position to move an idea forward or to reject it. If at any time you wish to withdraw an idea from our shortlist, please just let us know.

Pilot

We need to hear a pilot before committing ourselves. You should discuss this with the commissioning editor before doing further work.
Conditional commission
Acceptance of all ideas is conditional on the issues listed below. Radio 4 is not responsible for any costs incurred prior to the full agreement. There will be important information included in the feedback field in proteus which will not be communicated through any other means so it is vital that you take time to read this, make notes of relevant information, and disseminate to colleagues where necessary.

- **Price and rights**
  Each conditional commission will be made with a fixed price offer that has been judged as value for money by the Commissioning and Finance and Business Affairs teams. It is intended that most will be at the published guide but we reserve the right to propose an alternative price if we believe it appropriate. If our price is accepted by you in writing there will be no need to submit a detailed budget. Contracts will be issued immediately to independent suppliers.

  If, however, you wish to challenge the offer made then a detailed budget in Proteus will be requested and scrutinised by our Finance and Business Affairs team with the aim of reaching agreement.

  Conditional acceptances may be withdrawn if agreement on price is not reached within a reasonable period.

  Radio 4 requires an appropriate set of rights dependent on the type of programme. This will vary only in exceptional circumstances. The price quoted on the commissioning brief is based on buying the standard set of rights for that programme. If fewer rights are bought, the price may be reduced.

- **Digital platform use**
  Rights should be cleared for streaming, together with a 30-day “listen again” window and podcast. Independent suppliers are required to clear the rights for podcast for any of the factual briefs (except the Narrative History brief comprising of 10 or more episodes), unless otherwise agreed between the BBC and the independent producer.

- **Schedule and delivery dates**
  Each proposal should include your ideal delivery date, though our conditional acceptance will not necessarily be able to reflect this date. We are unlikely to issue precise transmission dates for programmes not pegged to a particular anniversary or season but will give the calendar quarter in which we intend to place them. If you cannot deliver to meet the given transmission quarter, notify Amanda Benson (Schedule Planning Manager). Precise delivery dates will be confirmed well before the start of each calendar quarter.

- **Editorial**
  A conditional acceptance might have specific editorial conditions attached to it, e.g. that a particular actor is available, and fulfilment of them must be confirmed before the commission is finalised and before you start work.
3. FACTUAL BRIEFS

History, Politics, Current Affairs, Science, Religion, Natural History, Ideas & Contemporary Stories

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

15’ FEATURE Brief number 47006
NARRATIVE HISTORY Brief number 47169
THE 28’ DOCUMENTARY Brief number 47209
TUESDAY DOCUMENTARY Brief number 47038
WEDNESDAY DEBATE Brief number 47040
SCIENCE-DOCUMENTARY Brief number 47051
9 O’CLOCK FORMATS Brief number 47004
ARCHIVE ON 4 Brief number 47088

General guidance on factual long form programmes (14’, 28’, 37’, 42/43’, 57’):

From 2016/17 onwards, all Factual documentaries will be commissioned under one commissioning editor. This will hopefully allow you to focus more on the quality of the offer and creativity of the idea and worry less about which slot you should be pitching in to.

There are some objectives common to all long form factual programming that we would like to emphasise:

- They need to complement and add value to the regular News sequence and strand business that make up 70% of the Radio 4 schedule.

- They need to be programmes that will be robust in the face of events (we will be making decisions up to 21 months in advance of transmission in some cases).

- They need to explore digital possibilities and adopt a “look, listen, share” strategy.
  - Look – how will your programmes appear online? How will they be described? What images will accompany them?
- Listen – how will your programmes sound as a podcast and not part of a linear schedule? Will the first 30 seconds compel?

- Share - will your programme or a section of your programme encourage people to want to share its contents? Think hard about what drives sharing activity.

- They should seek opportunities, where appropriate, to break down the wall that can exist between analytical, evidence based journalism on the one hand, and crafted story telling on the other. For too long an artificial divide has existed between different types of documentary/feature making on Radio 4.

All factual programmes should seek to tell compelling stories, to use sound innovatively and think hard about the sonic quality of the programme and listener experience.

Of the many things that we would like the long form factual documentary to achieve for the audience, five stand out:

- **Explain** –
  - provide history, context and analysis to help better understand the world and events that fill their daily lives.
  - anticipate where the world is heading and create stepping stones for the audience to step more confidently into the future.

- **Expose** –
  - uncover wrong doing.
  - hold those in power to account.
  - bring to the fore those voices often excluded from the airwaves – those Radio 4 is good at talking about but often fails to hear directly from.
  - get your microphone up close to those who are often in view, but rarely overheard.

- **Explode** –
  - challenge received wisdom and established historical narratives.
  - force the audience to interrogate beliefs.
  - pop the “filter bubbles” that can develop around us, protecting us from uncomfortable truths and opposing views.
  - eschew simple narratives, explore complexity and uncertainty.
• Enchant –
  o speaks for itself...bring surprise and wonder to the airwaves. We want to encourage programmes that transport the audience through the power of sound and storytelling. We are keen to see some risk taking when telling factual stories.

• Emergent –
  o spot patterns before they become “trends”.
  o help Radio 4 be the space that publishes new research, new thinking, new analysis rather than the place that simply reports others’ findings.
  o make news, don’t simply report it.
All 15' FEATURES

Reference number: 47006

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in radio features production at both producer and executive producer level.

Where your offer is journalistic, we will expect a proven track record in the relevant sphere of journalism at both producer and executive producer level. If your proposal involves journalism in foreign countries we expect to see experience of such work in countries relevant to your offer. Foreign travel to countries where conflict or other factors incur high risk will require proof of accredited hostile environment training. Radio 4 will not be able to pay for such training.

Slot: Weekdays, 0930 and 1345

Duration: 14'

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £3,100

Estimated number of programmes available for open competition (across 0930 and 1345 weekdays): 50 episodes

To avoid confusion, all ideas for 15’ feature programmes should be entered in this brief.

Primarily, we will commission clusters of 5 x 15' here but a limited number of single, two, three and four part programmes will also be considered. If your series needs to be scheduled on consecutive days please flag this up.

Narrative History series of 10 episodes or more are entered under brief 47169.
Cap:

These slots are heavily oversubscribed and, in these busy times, we are keen to minimise the amount of wasted effort on both sides. We are therefore continuing to invite fewer pre-offers ideas to achieve a more realistic balance between the number of proposals and the volume of business available.

Therefore, please do not enter more than 10 separate ideas offers for the 15’ features slot.

EDITORIAL GUIDE

The short features open up opportunities for audiences to engage with storytelling with a different rhythm and pace. They are a great place to tell episodic stories, programmes that naturally divide into a series of smaller explorations or journeys.

The 15 minute programmes are placed in high profile parts of the schedule, often between well know Radio 4 strands.

They provide a bridge between The World at One and The Archers for example when there are breaks in the narrative history commissions at 13.45. Features that change theme and texture are particularly welcome. Please do not offer too many history ideas so that we can vary the range of ideas at lunchtime.

As with all long form ideas you will need to set out clearly why you want to make this programme for the Radio 4 audience.

Please read the general guidance for factual long form programmes (p.7).

Craft

We are keen to encourage more crafted feature making in these slots and more imaginative treatments. So please think long and hard about how your series will break down into single episodes and how they will join up to be greater than the sum of their parts.

Digital

We also know that 15’ is a great length for podcasts and all offers should address digital potential. This is where we will be focusing a lot of Radio 4’s digital ambition in the coming year and offers should reflect this. How can you make your ideas findable and shareable…and how will they feel when listened to time shifted and away from the linear schedule?

We will create a few returning brands here so this is a great opportunity to come up with an exciting, clever new digitally savvy series to capture the hearts and minds of audio lovers everywhere.

With the long commissioning lead-ins, ideas must stand the test of time and not date too quickly. Some slots will be held back for reactive commissioning.
12:04 Slot

We will place some of the offers we receive here in the 12:04 shorter 12’30” slot when Home Front is not on air.

In the past this has been home to Across the Board, A History of Ideas, Mythologies, The Why Factor, The Curious Cases of Rutherford & Fry and other innovative formats. If you feel your idea will work well here please flag up in your final proposal.

Proposal to include

- brief synopsis explaining focus of the idea and indicating style and treatment.
- proposals for series should give an idea of the breakdown into episodes.
- suggested presenters should be included, where appropriate, with a note on whether they have been approached or involved in developing the idea.
- any book deal or other commercial activity linked to the material.
Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in radio features production at both producer and executive producer level.

To be commissioned in this slot, programme areas or companies will have to demonstrate that they have a significant track record in the making of major history series, going beyond the ad hoc documentary. The ability to craft complex arguments over several episodes will be key, as well as the expertise that will be brought to the project, either from within the team or through advisers.

Slot: Monday-Friday, 13.45

Duration: 14’

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £3,100 per episode

Estimated number of programmes available for open competition: 90 episodes

EDITORIAL GUIDE

Narrative History has established itself as a high impact slot on Radio 4. It is where we tell some of our biggest history stories, from *Incarnations: India in 50 Lives* to *British Liberalism: The Grand Tour.*

We also explore intellectual history in this slot, recent examples being *Charisma: Pinning Down the Butterfly* or *From Savage to Self,* which explored the discipline of Anthropology.
It is the opportunity to construct chronological, thematic or other narratives from these brilliant building blocks that makes this slot both challenging and exciting.

The combination of expertise and original authorship with dynamic and imaginative use of audio offer huge potential for creative and intellectual ambition. These are also programmes that work well as digital downloads, with short episodes building over a number of weeks.

Please read the general guidance on factual long form programmes (p 7).

We have been able to develop some very important voices in this slot, and would like to continue to use the slot to feature some of the best historians and thinkers out there.

Not all the series in this slot are of the same length; one or two will be broadcast over 4 to 6 weeks. Other commissions will be around 10 episodes. All narrative history commissions of 10+ episodes will normally include a weekly 58’ omnibus version.

To give the slot variety and to create changes of pace in the schedule over the year, we also intersperse the history series with short runs of general features commissioned under the 15’ feature brief - number 47006.

An offer in this slot should explain why you want to introduce or reintroduce the Radio 4 audience to the history you are passionate about. Are there new things to say about it? How is it relevant to today? Does the thesis challenge received wisdom?

We would expect to know who will write and present the series – this is key to understanding how the editorial authority of the project will be guaranteed and how it will sound on air. We would like to know if you are using an adviser or consultant.

We would expect an indicative outline of how the series might work across a number of weeks. Please also state digital ambitions, where appropriate.

2016/17:

We have big takes on:

- the Cold War,
- marketing,
- faith and society,
- farming,
- diplomacy,
- student life
- weather

all coming up in 2016/17.
Proposal to include

- a clear but not over-detailed synopsis of the idea.
- an editorial motivation for the events you have chosen.
- a preliminary sense of how the breakdown into weeks might work.
- detailed thoughts about authorship and presentation.
- ideas about treatment.
- realistic budget assumptions.
- any specific digital proposition.
THE 28’ DOCUMENTARY

Reference number: 47209

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in radio features production at both producer and executive producer level.

Where your offer is journalistic, we will expect a proven track record in the relevant sphere of journalism at both producer and executive producer level.

If your proposal involves journalism in foreign countries we expect to see experience of such work in countries relevant to your offer. Foreign travel to countries where conflict or other factors incur high risk will require proof of accredited hostile environment training. Radio 4 will not be able to pay for such training.

If you have not previously made programmes for Radio 4, you should include your production track record at the end of the long synopsis in your final offer.

Slots: 1602, 1330, 1102 & 2002

Duration: 28'

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £8,300

Estimated number of programmes available to open competition: 60

Cap:

These slots are heavily oversubscribed and, in these busy times, we are keen to minimise the amount of wasted effort on both sides. We are therefore continuing to invite fewer pre-offers ideas to achieve a more realistic balance between the number of proposals and the volume of business available.
Therefore, please do not enter more than 15 offers for the 28’ Documentary. We know this will be tough, but we have to encourage more editorial restraint at the pre-offers stage.

For BBC departments with an output guarantee, please limit your total offers to twice the number remaining in your combined 11.02 and 20.02 guarantee (or 15 if that is the higher figure).

**New production talent:**

We would like to actively encourage the next generation of documentary makers. Therefore, in 2017/18 we will be ring-fencing a number of documentaries for first time long form producers. Any ideas from new producer talent will sit outside the cap.

**EDITORIAL GUIDE**

We are merging the briefs for the 1102 and 2002 28’ documentary. We want suppliers to focus on developing brilliant ideas for long form content on Radio 4 and worry less about slots. We will also commission the very best ideas into our highest profile slot – 0902.

The half hour documentary is where creative storytelling and journalistic insight combine to explore the world we live in.

**Of the many things that we would like the long form factual documentary to achieve for the audience, five stand out:**

- **Explain –**
  - provide history, context and analysis to help better understand the world and events that fill their daily lives.
  - anticipate where the world is heading and create stepping stones for the audience to step more confidently into the future.

- **Expose –**
  - uncover wrong doing.
  - hold those in power to account.
  - bring to the fore those voices often excluded from the airwaves – those Radio 4 is good at talking about but often fails to hear directly from (the voiceless).
  - get your microphone up close to those who are often in view, but rarely overheard (the powerful).
• **Explode** –
  o challenge received wisdom and established historical narratives.
  o force the audience to interrogate their beliefs.
  o pop the “filter bubbles” that can develop around us, protecting us from uncomfortable truths and opposing views.
  o eschew simple narratives, explore complexity and uncertainty.

• **Enchant** –
  o speaks for itself…bring surprise and wonder to the airwaves. We want to encourage programmes that transport the audience through the power of sound and storytelling. We are keen to see some experimentation when telling factual stories.

• **Emergent** –
  o spot patterns before they become established “trends”.
  o publish first - help Radio 4 be the space that champions new research, new thinking, new analysis rather than the place that simply reports others’ findings.
  o make news, don’t simply report it.

If your idea does not meet one or more of these objectives, it is unlikely to succeed.

**Please read general guidance for factual long form programmes (p.7).**

Some further guidance:

• We will take a mix of single docs and series in this slot. Where you submit a multi-part story, you must be clear how the series will divide into distinct episodes and be prepared to justify the amount of time given to the idea. On the whole, series will only work in this slot if they are big and ambitious (consider also the 15’ slot for multi-part programmes).

• Context is king. As stated, programmes or series that deepen our understanding of the world and events are valued here. The more you can provide the audience with the knowledge and analysis they require to be “engaged citizens” the better.

• We want more women and people from ethnic communities presenting in this slot.

• This is where we reveal the modern UK and feature the stories and lives that get
to the heart of our evolving society. How is our society changing under our noses?

- Where your story is very specifically located please explain how you will make documentary of interest to a national audience.

- We want to encourage and celebrate the very best in crafted documentary making here. Ideas for brilliant sound led story telling will be particularly welcome here.

- We also value stories that tell us about emerging trends – global and local - and bring into focus areas of the world that are in flux or which the audience should be made more aware of.

- Revisionism is welcomed here - documentaries that uncover new evidence about the past or feature new arguments challenging the received wisdom regarding a historical event or period.

- Where the subject matter is complex, proposals should suggest ways in which actuality and texture will be used to give the audience time to absorb and reflect.

- Please consider UK history as well as foreign. We have Crossing Continents immediately after the Monday evening slot half the year.

- More polemic and thesis driven programmes and series would be welcome in this slot.

- Beware anniversary pegs. They are rarely sufficient in their own right.

- Most importantly, think why this story should be told in long form documentary and would not be best covered as an item or series of items on a regular Radio 4 strand. Listen to the other single topic strands that sit in on the network like Analysis, In Business, Crossing Continents, File on 4 and The Report.

- Please indicate whether a named presenter has been involved at proposal stage.

- Where the series is big enough we may want to explore the possibility of a book spin-off. However, where there is a pre-existing book deal involved, this MUST be flagged up in the proposal.

- Radio 4 reserves the right to commission some of the individual ideas and schedule these under an umbrella with work from other suppliers.
Digital

Please flag up where you think your idea has specific digital potential. If we commission it, and agree it has digital legs, we will co-ordinate with the Radio 4 multiplatform team from the outset.

Not every idea will be able to get extra digital support, but every idea commissioned should have a “look, listen, share” strategy that enables it to live well beyond its linear outing. See general guidance on factual programmes (p.7).

The Untold

Please note that we have launched The Untold – a new first person observational documentary strand on Mondays at 1102.

Whilst this does not rule out other programmes driven by first person testimony, other observational work, or programmes seeking to give voice to the voiceless, it will have an impact on how many stories of this sort we will commission here.

Reactive Commissioning

With reactive commissioning now established, we expect to buy about two thirds of the programmes available for 2017/18, leaving space free to respond to events. Our aim is to get the big building blocks of the slot in place (returning series and longer term projects) without compromising the Network’s ability to react to a fast moving world.

Do not exceed two written pages of A4.

Proposal to include

- a clear date for any peg.
- brief synopsis explaining the focus of the idea and indicating style and treatment.
- proposals for series should give an idea of the breakdown into episodes.
- suggested presenters should be included, where appropriate, with a note on whether they have been approached or involved in developing the idea.
- any book deal or other commercial activity linked to the material.

Podcasts

Radio 4 may wish to include programmes from this slot in one of its podcast streams. With your agreement, the Radio 4 Multiplatform team would publish the download from the supplied programme. Radio 4 will meet any additional clearance costs attributable to the podcast. When we ask for your agreement to the podcast, we'll also ask for an estimate of clearance costs to enable us to decide whether it is practical to proceed.
TUESDAY DOCUMENTARY

Reference number: 47038

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in radio or TV documentary production at both producer and executive producer level.

We expect a proven track record in the relevant sphere of journalism at both producer and executive producer level. If your proposal involves journalism in foreign countries we expect to see experience of such work in countries relevant to your offer. Foreign travel to countries where conflict or other factors incur high risk will require proof of accredited hostile environment training. Radio 4 will not be able to pay for such training.

Slot: Tuesday, 2002 (repeat: Sunday 1702)

Duration: 37'

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £10,200

Estimated number of programmes available to open competition: 10

The number of programmes open to competition in this slot is very small and the journalistic barrier to entry high, so please be realistic when deciding upon the number of offers you submit.

EDITORIAL GUIDE

These programmes run in the File on 4 break. In the past this has been the place for one-off investigative documentaries covering a large range of subjects: arts, religion, politics, social affairs, science, health, sport and international stories.
The key to this slot is depth and ambition. This is a place for long term investigations, big stories of national importance, ground breaking journalism. It’s where we run our exclusive access documentaries. It is also where we will run heavyweight intellectual projects of enquiry and the biggest foreign stories. In short, this is a slot that is all about impact.

Please read the general guidance on factual long form programmes (p.7).

Some further guidance

- What’s your story, what’s your angle? It is not enough to identify an area of interest. Too many proposals fail to clearly set out a specific line of enquiry and are too general in their approach.

- If you are pitching an access doc, please consider the editorial challenges proximity might throw up and address how you will meet them. Also, access needs to have a purpose, not just because you can.

- File on 4 sits in this slot for the majority of the year. Think hard about why your documentary idea wouldn’t be the kind of story that the File on 4 team might get to in the usual course of events.

- We understand that it might not be possible to supply all the data for an investigation at the proposal stage, but the proposal should indicate the approach taken and the evidence so far that further work can be justified.

- This is also a place to run stories that need more space than a 28’ doc will allow but need to be housed in a single narrative rather than being split into a series.

- Careful consideration should be given to the potential resonance of the idea in a year or mores time, when the programme will likely be transmitted.

- We are keen to encourage more women and people from ethnic communities as presenters.

- Please indicate whether the presenter has been involved in the development of the proposal.

Podcasts

Radio 4 may wish to include programmes from this slot in one of its podcast streams. With your agreement, the Radio 4 Multiplatform team would publish the download from the supplied programme. Radio 4 will meet any additional clearance costs attributable to the download. When we ask for your agreement to the download, we’ll also ask for an estimate of clearance costs to enable us to decide whether it is practical to proceed.
WEDNESDAY DEBATE

Reference number: 47040

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in relevant types of radio or TV production at both producer and executive producer level. If you have not previously made programmes for Radio 4, you should include your production track record at the end of the long synopsis in your final offer.

Slot: Wednesday, 2002 (repeat Saturday 2215)

Duration: 43’

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £8,000

Estimated number of programmes available for open competition: 20

The number of programmes open to competition in this slot is very small so please be realistic when deciding on the number of offers you submit here.

EDITORIAL GUIDE

This slot is home to The Moral Maze for 26 weeks of the year. In the past, we have commissioned debate formats, such as Decision Time, Leader Conference and Bringing Up Britain in this slot.

From 2015/16, this slot has been home to a 12 part series exploring the future - Futureproofing

Proposals should also be aware of the Any Questions? format on Friday evenings.
Please read the general guidance on factual long form programmes (p.7).

Some further guidance:

- A debate at this time should lift the tone of the evening schedule and inject some energy into proceedings.

- This is a chance to develop fresh formats which could turn into returning strands on the network.

- Do think about how the programme might interact with listeners beyond the usual “Oxford Union” or phone-in formats.

- One-off debates are possible, though these need to command their place in this slot in particular rather than being a special edition of a specialist magazine programme.

- Where a format is proposed and it is not possible to look forward to issues for 2017/18, it would be useful to include an indication of the subjects that would be covered were this series about to be transmitted.

**Presenter**

- The right presenter who is able to hold the ring with authority and wit is essential to these programmes.

- Please indicate whether the presenter has been involved in the development of the proposal.

- The ability to create some kind of sense of event and manage a complex, often audience-based format, is essential.

**Proposal to include**

- Outline of the subject, presenter, locations, number in run.
- Treatment: breakdown of “live” vs. taped elements.
- Audience or studio based.
- Format.
- CVs of presenter and producer.
SCIENCE DOCUMENTARY

Reference number: 47051

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in radio or TV documentary production, preferably with a track record in science, at both producer and executive producer level.

Where your offer is journalistic, we expect a proven track record at both producer and executive producer level.

Slot: Tuesday/Wednesday 2102

Duration: 28’

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £8,100

Estimated number of programmes available to open competition: 8

The number of programmes open to competition in science is very small, so please be realistic when deciding upon the number of ideas to submit here.

EDITORIAL GUIDE

Scientific discovery and technological innovation are changing our world at a rapid pace, and this is a place to make programmes that help our audience understand how these changes will affect their lives.

These will mostly be built feature/documentary-style programmes which will reveal areas of discovery, new developments or issues in science.

Please read the general guidance on factual long form programmes (p.7).
Please note we have topical weekly magazine strands *Inside Science* and *Inside Health*, which explore developments in science.

Also, please note that there have been two relatively recent additions to Radio 4’s science portfolio – *The Life Scientific* and *The Digital Human*, which explore biography and technology respectively. Please note we will also be introducing a new history of science strand shortly – *Science Stories* – so it is unlikely we will buy many more programmes focused primarily on the past.

WOCC commissions here are likely to be single documentaries rather than series.

**Natural History**

We will also consider some natural history material here - features which reflect the inter-relationship between the animal kingdom and the environment as a whole. These tend to be most successful when issue based, though sound stories capturing the wonder of the natural world can work well here too.

But please be mindful of the Natural History Unit’s output on Radio 4 and Costing the Earth. And please also be aware that *Natural Histories* will be returning with another 25 episodes telling the stories of our best loved species.

Some further guidance.

- Think carefully about what Radio 4 already does in this area and what science might be covered by returning strands. **Too many offers are simply ideas that would sit best as a 7 minute item in a magazine programme.**

- Please take special care when writing your proposal to show how you will make the story come alive for the (non-scientist) audience at home; this is of particular importance when dealing with the “non-human” sciences.

- We should not shy away from complex science here, but need to continue to work on ways of making this accessible (proposals should address this).

- Whilst ideas about health and the environment are welcome here, producers should also bear in mind that Tuesday at 2102 is dedicated to health and *Costing the Earth* runs in this slot for half the year.

- We are keen to encourage more women and people from ethnic communities as presenters in this slot.

- Please indicate whether the presenter has been involved in the development of the proposal.

- Radio 4 reserves the right to commission some of the individual ideas and schedule these under an umbrella with work from other suppliers.
Podcasts

Radio 4 may wish to include programmes from this slot in one of its podcast streams. With your agreement, the Radio 4 Multiplatform team would publish the download from the supplied programme. Radio 4 will meet any additional clearance costs attributable to the download. When we ask for your agreement to the download, we'll also ask for an estimate of clearance costs to enable us to decide whether it is practical to proceed.

Proposal to include

- Reasons for why we should do this story now.
- Details of presentation and production style.
- CVs of presenter and producer.
9 O’CLOCK FORMATS

Reference number: 47004

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in relevant types of radio or TV production at both producer and executive producer level.

Slot: Weekdays, 0902

Duration: 28’ or 42’

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide Price: £7,000 (interview and studio formats)

Estimated number of programmes available for open competition: 3 or 4 series

Cap: No more than TWO format ideas per supplier please

EDITORIAL GUIDE

The 0902 slot is one of the most high profile showcases on Radio 4. It is the home of some of the network’s best known, well-loved and long running factual programmes: Start the Week, Midweek, In Our Time and Desert Island Discs.

Series such as The Reunion, The Long View, The Reith Lectures, Stephen Fry’s English Delight and The Life Scientific have also established themselves here.

And there have been more ad hoc, high profile series such as Behaving Ourselves – Mitchell on Manners and Europe: The Roots of Identity.

As in previous rounds, we will promote the very best documentary and long form feature ideas from the material that is submitted in the Factual and Arts documentary
slots. This will account for the majority of content commissioned here.

**Formats**

9am has traditionally been home to innovative formats in the summer months. Examples in recent years include *What’s the Point of...?*, *The House I Grew Up In*, *Inside the Ethics Committee* and *Fantasy Festival*.

These complement regular format shows such as *Start the Week*, *In Our Time* and *Desert Island Discs*.

We are looking to encourage a new generation of 9 O’Clock formats here. We are not looking for many, but we are looking for clever, presenter-led, studio-based shows that use format to achieve some of the ends laid out in the general guidance on factual long form programmes on p.7.

We expect proposals to be editorially ambitious with high profile presentation and where appropriate a digital dimension. This slot is broadly based and not just focused on current affairs. It is unlikely we would take more science here though.

Proximity to *Today* should also be borne in mind when establishing the tone of a 0902 programme. The style of production, potential power of the material, strength of the contributors and the promise of revelation will be essential ingredients. How you will hold the attention of the audience at this key junction should be highlighted in your proposal.

Please do not enter documentary ideas under this brief as we will consider some of the offers submitted for other slots for placing here. This brief is specifically focused on new format ideas for 9am.

Given the scale of the ideas required, we do not expect more than TWO proposals from any company or department for 0902 at pre-offers.

Please check the full range of strands and series that Radio 4 already broadcasts to avoid duplication of programmes already commissioned.

Depending on the idea we might commission a pilot rather than going into production.

**Budget**

Radio 4 expects to pay the guide price for programmes in this slot so please budget at that level and use the guide price as the budget. If the expected price differs significantly from the guide price please discuss it with the commissioning editor.

**Podcasts**

Radio 4 may wish to include programmes from this slot in one of its podcast streams. With your agreement, the Radio 4 Multiplatform team would publish the podcast from
the supplied programme. Radio 4 will meet any additional clearance costs attributable to the podcast. When we ask for your agreement to the podcast, we'll also ask for an estimate of clearance costs to enable us to decide whether it is practical to proceed.
Proposal to include

- clear treatment and explanation why the format will sound fresh and new.
- suggested cast list and presenter and whether they have been approached.
ARCHIVE ON 4

Reference number: 47088

Commissioning Editor: Mohit Bakaya
Commissioning Co-ordinator: Sara Sund

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in radio or TV documentary production at both producer and executive producer level.

If you have not previously made programmes for Radio 4, you should include your production track record at the end of the long synopsis in your final offer.

Slot: Saturday, 2002

Duration: 57'

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: £8,000

Estimated number of programmes available for open competition: 20

EDITORIAL GUIDE

“…the Archive on 4 strand, which, for reasons I've yet to fathom, rarely puts a foot wrong. I've tried to find fault, because no series can be this perfect, but so far to no avail. Whether investigating William Burroughs' legacy or the media coverage of Patty Hearst, these hour-long, socio-political programmes are rigorously researched, beautifully produced and mesmerising in their detail”

(Fiona Sturges, The Independent, 5th February 2015)

Archive on 4 has become an important part of the Radio 4 schedule. It has evolved into a classy storytelling hour using the archive, rather than a simple showcase for broadcast material.
We are looking for ideas that maintain the quality and range of subjects in this Saturday night slot.

Story is key here. The best Archive on 4s deploy analysis, argument, wit, revisionism, new interviews and authorship along with compelling archive material.

Here are some pointers that may prove helpful when putting your offer (and programme) together:

- This strand should include a wide variety of ideas: individual life stories or biographies, cultural, scientific, social, political, sporting or entertainment history.

- The authority, charisma and energy of the presenter are all vital to the success of programmes in this slot. The presenter needs to actively engage with the archive and do more than simply link clip A to clip B.

- One of the challenges for those making programmes in the Archive on 4 slot is to tell stories that can sustain the hour. Proposals should set out how the idea justifies a 57 minute origination, has enough twists and turns to keep the listener engaged.

- Don’t forget this goes out on Saturday night. Programmes should seek to entertain and engage, as well as inform and educate.

- Programmes can include new interviews, where appropriate, but the slot is not funded or designed to feature a large amount of new material. You are also allowed out of the studio on occasion!

- Please think hard about whether your idea is really an Archive on 4. Too many offers come in where the bulk of archive available is written, or where the fact that some new archive has come to light becomes the sole reason to submit to this slot. Offers should demonstrate why the story is best told through audio archive.

- Archive sources beyond the BBC’s have worked well. Indeed, some of these are better suited to providing longer inserts than much of the BBC News material. But beware offering programmes simply because the archive has become available.

- There will always be a place for simpler programmes that just make use of fantastic archive without much else besides, but the archive needs to be just that – fantastic!

- In the past, we have had too many anniversary pegged programmes that move gently, but rather predictably, through their story, offering few new insights. If you are submitting an anniversary pegged proposal, do say how you might introduce surprise and challenge expectations.
• When choosing the presenter, do think carefully about how his/her voice would contrast with the type of archive that will dominate the hour.

• Be mindful of the cumulative effect of an hour of very old archive…it can make listening hard work!

• We could do with more women presenters in this slot. And more ethnic diversity too.

• Please indicate whether the presenter has been involved in the development of the proposal.

Podcasts

Radio 4 may wish to include programmes from this slot in one of its podcast streams. With your agreement, the Radio 4 Multiplatform team would publish the download from the supplied programme. Radio 4 will meet any additional clearance costs attributable to the download. When we ask for your agreement to the download, we'll also ask for an estimate of clearance costs to enable us to decide whether it is practical to proceed.

Proposal to include

• List of possible subjects / themes to be covered
• Clear details of audio archive available and whether access has been secured
• Treatment
• CVs of presenter and producer

NB: Where the programme is to comprise clips of archive recordings/ pre-recorded material, details of ownership and availability of rights should (wherever possible) be provided. If no preliminary enquiries have been made, this should be stated. As far as entire or complete programmes are concerned (i.e. where we would normally expect to take a licence to broadcast), details of availability of broadcast rights, ownership and price per broadcast must be provided.
4. SPECIAL EVENTS and SEASONS

Reference number: 47132

Jointly managed by the commissioning team

When entering a proposal here, do not also put ideas for component programmes into other briefs.

Eligibility: We invite proposals from BBC departments and independent production companies who can clearly demonstrate considerable experience in the relevant genres of radio production at both producer and executive producer level.

Transmission period: April 2017 to March 2018

Guide price: Not applicable

EDITORIAL GUIDE

What distinguishes a Special Event or Season is that it should be a proposal on a single theme which crosses strands or day parts. The impact will be different and distinctive from the rest of the station’s schedule. A sense of occasion or celebration may be created.

Proposals may span a variety of commissioning briefs and their coherence becomes obvious only when the various parts are assembled.

Sometimes, small, carefully constructed clusters of programmes might be commissioned from one supplier in their entirety. More often, Radio 4 management will scope out the scale and scheduling of a season.

Therefore, ideas for Special Events that get past the pre-offers stage should be discussed with Commissioning Editors before you do any work on the detail.

An anniversary might be marked on several stations. Your proposal for Radio 4 must be utterly distinctive and clearly shaped for our audience. However, we can be over-reliant on anniversaries. We particularly welcome suggestions of events or a focus on a subject that will surprise the audience and be distinctive. Innovative treatments of more predictable events are also welcome. A big event on Radio 4 may also enable us to design a schedule of complementary archive programming on 4 Extra.

Some of our Special Events are contained within one day. Democracy Day, King James Bible, Bloomsday and War and Peace are examples.
Others have spread more widely, in terms of programme style and timetable. These include *World War I, Magna Carta, Tweet of the Day, Natural Histories and Coding*.

Our World War coverage has already been extensive and there is more in production. We are unlikely to look for much more.

The following BBC series, clusters and seasons are already planned for the year: *The Periodic Table, The Making of the North, Rest...Dreams... Sleep, The Cold War (over two years), Mars, Reading Europe and the Easter Rising*.

With such events, the core programmes and the idea might come from one group of producers, but other programmes might subsequently be commissioned from elsewhere.

We have found that event ideas which have been created between different teams with varied expertise can be particularly striking. So, a seasonal event or idea might come from one source but the station reserves the right to commission a portfolio of programmes from diverse sources to provide the listener with the best possible schedule.

So, Radio 4 is looking for:

- programming which merits schedule busting and/or collaboration with existing News sequences and factual strands
- special days, nights or weekends
- seasons spread over a given period, or building to a big landmark/event

**Digital**

We are looking for big ideas with a digital dimension. However, we would expect to develop these ambitions with you.

We are looking to commission only a very few such ideas this year, so be realistic about the development time you devote to this area. Do not enter a budget estimate for the digital element of your proposal.

This will be considered on an ad hoc basis once we decide to take an idea forward, and worked up in collaboration with the Radio 4 team.

This is a rapidly changing landscape and we would appreciate a flexible approach when developing all digital propositions.
5. CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSIONS AND SUPPORTING MATERIAL FOR FACTUAL

This is only required for final offers.

Apart from published books and commercially published DVDs, all work must be sent electronically.

Examples of Presenters and Talent

If they have work online (YouTube, blogs, podcasts etc.) please include a link in your offer rather than sending in downloads etc.

Delivery of Supporting Written Material

Written material (e.g. CVs, sample dialogue or scripts) should not be put on Proteus. It must be sent by email to sara.sund@bbc.co.uk. Please identify which offer it is for within the filename.

Delivery of Supporting Audio and Video

Submit via an online file-sharing service (e.g. wetransfer.com) to sara.sund@bbc.co.uk. Audio must be .mp3 format. Please identify which offer it is for within the filename. You do not need to include audio for returning series as we already have access to the programmes.

These must be delivered by 1700 on the day of the commissioning round deadline.

A complete inventory of materials supplied must be included, using the form below.

- Any physical supporting material (published books, DVDs etc.) must be delivered by the submissions deadline to:
  Commissioning Co-ordinator
  BBC Radio 4, Room 4028 Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

- Label each item with your name, department / company, the title and the commissioning brief number of the offer.

- Indicate in the long synopsis that you are supplying supporting material.

- With the exception of published books and videos, we cannot return supporting material to you.
### INVENTORY OF SUPPORTING MATERIAL FOR FINAL OFFERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPLIER DEPARTMENT / COMPANY</th>
<th>COMMISSIONING BRIEF NUMBER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SUPPORTING MATERIAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. 47112 Classic Serial</td>
<td>e.g. The Best Play Ever</td>
<td>e.g. Book: <em>The Best Story in the World</em></td>
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| EMAIL …………………………………………………… |
| TEL ……………………………………………………… |
| DATE…………………………………………………… |
6. BBC EDITORIAL GUIDELINES & COMPLIANCE

BBC Editorial Guidelines  http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/

All programmes, whether commissioned in-house or from an independent producer, are subject to the BBC Editorial Guidelines. These set out the BBC’s editorial standards, policy on sensitive content, legal and political issues, and the system for consultation and referrals during the production of programmes. Failure to comply with these guidelines may lead to the commission being withdrawn and/or a claim for breach of contract.

Compliance

We require that every recorded programme be heard by a production person of appropriate seniority and formally signed off by them. BBC programmes are signed off by their executive producer or editor. But independent productions must be heard and approved prior to broadcast by Roger Mahony, Radio 4’s Editor, Editorial Standards (sometimes referred to as the compliance editor).

These decisions are logged in a compliance form, where editorially sensitive content must be flagged. The form is available on Proteus.
7. THE BBC RADIO 4 AUDIENCE

- **Reach:** 11.9 million or 1 in 5 adults listen to Radio 4 each week, 20% of the population.

- **Hours:** Radio 4 continues to have a very loyal audience. The average Radio 4 listener tunes in for 11 hours and 32 minutes each week. In total that makes 126 million hours every week.

- **Share:** Share takes all the minutes listened to any radio, and works out what proportion of this Radio 4 makes up. Radio 4’s share of listening is 12.4%, or one in every 8 minutes of all radio consumed.

- **Genre:** News attracts the largest number of listeners, at 9.6m per week. Drama attracts a strong 7.1 million average listeners a week, and comedy reaches 5.6 million.

- **Online:** Radio 4 attracts a record 1.6 million unique browsers to its site each month, the biggest of any BBC Radio station. Of this 1.6m, 2 in 5 of these are on mobile or tablet. There are over 20 million iPlayer requests for Radio 4 programmes monthly, providing Radio 4 with a huge digital footprint.

- The station continues to have a balanced audience in terms of gender (50% male / 50% female). The average age of the Radio 4 listener is 56 years old and skews towards an older audience. Our target audience of 35-54 ABC1 (commonly termed ‘replenishers’) make up 26% of the audience. The station also continues to have an upmarket bias – 76% of those tuning in fall into the ABC1 demographic.

**When do they listen?**

![Reach Radio 4 daypart chart](image-url)
What other radio stations do they listen to?

For any questions about the Radio 4 audience, please contact Elizabeth Lane, Research Manager for Radio 4 and 4 Extra: Elizabeth.lane@bbc.co.uk.