BBC and Northern Ireland Screen Partnership Agreement
Context

‘The BBC must be the risk capital for the UK creative industries’

Lord Tony Hall, BBC Director-General

‘Northern Ireland will have the strongest screen industry outside of London in the UK and Ireland within 10 years’

Northern Ireland Screen’s Opening Doors Strategy

Purpose

This Partnership Agreement identifies areas where the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen will work together to:

- Support the production of broadcast and online content with network and international potential
- Invest in developing an internationally competitive screen industry in Northern Ireland
- Help ensure that Northern Ireland is strongly represented to audiences across the UK and internationally
- Jointly make the case for the economic benefits of investment in the creative sector and highlight the distinct, but complementary, roles which both parties play in this area
Financial Commitments

- The BBC commits to invest a minimum of 2.9% of its network Television spend in Northern Ireland in 2016. This is in addition to the investment provided by BBC Northern Ireland.

- Northern Ireland Screen commits to supporting this Partnership Agreement using funding mechanisms contained within its Opening Doors Strategy 2014-18, which has an overall added value target of £250 million for the period 2014-18.

Content Collaboration

Drama

Through regular engagement between BBC Drama and NI Screen the parties will:

- Build on and renew the current successful Northern Ireland-produced BBC Drama slate, with BBC and NI Screen co-financing productions

- Work to increase NI-produced commissions on BBC TWO and BBC ONE

- Identify opportunities to produce television drama series in Northern Ireland that are capable of attracting international co-financing. This may involve the co-funding of development

- BBC and NI Screen recognise the importance of local production ownership and creative talent in the long term development of a sustainable sector

- BBC Drama will invest a minimum of £200,000 per year during the term in the development of local writing, directing, performing and production talent
**Children’s & Animation**

BBC and NI Screen will enhance already significant levels of production for CBBC and CBeebies through:

- A BBC commitment to invest an average of £2 million per year during the term in Children’s content made in Northern Ireland

- A Northern Ireland Screen commitment to co-develop and co-finance with the BBC live action scripted, animation, interactive and games content with international potential

- Targeted Children’s Commissioning Briefings on live action and animation opportunities for companies based in Northern Ireland

- Working together to identify and support animation projects aimed at non-children’s audiences, including for BBC 3 and the international market

**Factual & Entertainment**

Recognising the importance of these genres to the production sector in Northern Ireland, the parties make these commitments:

- The BBC will actively seek to find and develop an observational documentary series set in Northern Ireland, with funding support from Northern Ireland Screen

- The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen will work together to encourage local producers to develop factual formats, including factual entertainment, with returnable UK network and international potential

- The BBC will brief local companies at an early stage of development of landmark series and seasons

- The BBC will continue to support the development of Entertainment formats which meet UK-wide network and genre needs

- The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen will support projects that have co-production potential with The Space digital arts initiative
Digital & Learning

Northern Ireland is home to innovative digital and games companies and has an excellent track record in educational programming and events. The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen will support growth in this area through:

- Engaging local digital producers in the BBC Rewind digital archive project and briefing them on other BBC Future Media opportunities
- Targeted Commissioning Briefings for local producers on interactive and games opportunities for CBBC and CBeebies which would attract match funding from Northern Ireland Screen
- Working to identify games and mobile content propositions from the BBC’s back catalogue which could attract match funding from Northern Ireland Screen
- Identifying opportunities for BBC NI Digital & Learning teams to work with NI Screen’s Education funded projects
- Developing and co-funding a training initiative for digital content creators, working in partnership with other organisations

Languages

Northern Ireland Screen and the BBC currently partner to fund and broadcast Irish and Ulster-Scots television programmes. They will build on this partnership in the following ways:

- The BBC will assist NI Screen in the technical development and maintenance of a portal where ILBF and USBF programming will be hosted indefinitely and which will be linked from the BBC
- The BBC will pursue opportunities for ILBF and USBF material to be broadcast on its network services
Partnerships

This partnership agreement centres on content and is envisaged as the first stage in a wider series of partnerships involving the BBC, Northern Ireland Screen and other bodies.

Term and Review

- This initial partnership agreement extends until December 2016. It is anticipated that it will be renewed and amended at that stage for a further period.

- The initiatives outlined in this partnership would be measured on a quarterly basis, with both parties exchanging information on current production and development projects in order to identify and address any potential shortfalls within the Term.