BBC Scotland Context

BBC Scotland operates from 13 staffed centres around the nation, from Shetland and Orkney to Selkirk and Dumfries. With its headquarters in Glasgow, it provides television, radio and online services, in English and Gaelic, to viewers and listeners across the length and breadth of Scotland’s major urban conurbations as well as its rural and island communities. In 2016/17 BBC Scotland produced over 2,500 hours of originated television content, 12,000 hours of radio and its online portfolio attracted an average of 6.8 million unique UK browsers each week.

BBC Scotland was fully represented as part of the Screen Sector Leadership Group, and contributed to a number of its findings.

Leadership, Strategy and Support

From Autumn of next year the BBC will, subject to regulatory approval from Ofcom, launch a new TV channel – BBC Scotland. With new investment of £19million in the channel and digital developments, together with re-purposed existing funding, that channel will have an initial budget of over £30million. It will broadcast every evening, providing a rich mix of content. Further, it will work in close partnership with the creative sector, national institutions and other broadcasters to produce and acquire material.

The BBC has also been making major investments in Scottish programming across Network TV output, with a particular focus on the commissioning of Drama and Factual programmes. Compared to 2015/16, this means we will be spending around £20m extra, per year, over the three years to March 2019. This will support the delivery of network production targets and put a greater emphasis on portraying the Nation, building on a year of real achievement in 2016, which has seen Scottish production account for 10.3% of network television supply. Dramas such as Trust Me, The Replacement and Clique – filmed in Scotland – are all products of this investment. And the BBC is putting another £1.2 million into BBC ALBA – which takes the total new investment in Scotland to an additional £40 million per annum.

We seek to reinvent the BBC for a new generation of audiences across the UK, including of course in Scotland. The BBC has a Licence Fee settlement that is linked to the Consumer Price Index. While this is helpful in terms of future planning, we will also very soon be required to absorb the cost of free licences for those over 75 years of age.

In Scotland, we have recognised that more needs to be done to support the broadcast industry and to provide a more effective means by which Scotland and its people can be portrayed and represented on air. The investment in the proposed new television channel, and the guaranteed additional investment in network TV content, allied to the recent announcement by the First Minister indicating that a
Further £10m of government funding will be invested in TV and film in Scotland, provides a strong financial base on which we can, collectively, grow the industry here and provide a significant improvement in what the sector as a whole can offer audiences in Scotland and beyond.

It is in this context that the BBC’s investment of £30million for the new channel should be viewed. We do not believe that £30million will represent the total value of the ultimate offer to the viewer. This should be a floor, not a ceiling. We think that, in line with a number of discussions at the Screen Sector Leadership Group, there must be an emphasis on that concept of collectivism, of various organisations and agencies working in collaboration to achieve a common aim. BBC Scotland does not believe that the BBC, the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, the independent production sector and others will be as successful individually in this endeavour as they will be if they were to work together, to achieve, in the end, something that is much greater than the sum of the parts. Much of what is now possible for the development of the sector in Scotland must be built through genuine partnerships, through a collaborative approach towards achieving a truly sustainable broadcast model for Scotland, one that crosses all broadcast platforms and embraces all audiences.

Recent Scottish Government announcements – on the intention to establish a dedicated screen unit within Creative Scotland, to provide funding for the establishment of a hub of the National Film and Television School at the BBC headquarters at Pacific Quay in Glasgow, and the allocation of funding to support script-writing developments related to the BBC ALBA drama Bannan – give clear indication of the determination and commitment to develop the industry and to provide much needed training and jobs in Scotland. It is a commitment the BBC shares, and the BBC looks further developing its work with the wider sector and with Creative Scotland in particular.

Finally on strategy, we note the call within the Screen Sector Leadership Group’s report for 100% of the Licence Fee raised in Scotland to be spent in Scotland. The Licence Fee raised around the UK funds a range of services, a number of which deploy resources beyond the UK. These include activities such as BBC global newsgathering with all foreign correspondents; the BBC World Service, now broadcasting 41 different language services; sports rights for events such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and the World Cup; and the technical support infrastructure for world-leading products such as iPlayer. We know such services are highly valued by audiences in Scotland, who expect the BBC to continue to fund and provide them.

**Talent Development, Skills and Training**

BBC Scotland recognises that sustainable growth in the sector depends on the ability of broadcasters and independent production companies to develop, nurture and retain Scotland-based talent. BBC Scotland plays a key role in building skills and delivering training across the media sector and works in partnership with external organisations such as Skillset and Skills Development Scotland to provide development and open up opportunities across the industry. BBC Scotland supports a range of interventions to support this work:
a) The National Film & Television School

The National Film and Television school is expected to open in Scotland – its first hub outside London – in January 2018, with students enrolling from April 2018. It will be based at BBC Scotland’s Pacific Quay site and will make use of training facilities at both Pacific Quay and Dumbarton. The school will specifically work to address gaps in existing provision by delivering courses other providers aren’t currently offering in Scotland, such as production accounting, script editing and factual development.

Projected annual student numbers are expected to be in the region of 450 (100 full time, 50 part time and 250 on CPD courses) with more than 1500 students expected to graduate from the facility within five years. The £475k Scottish Government funding will provide start-up funding for the school with a third going to bursaries to advance equality and diversity in the screen sector, and the BBC’s investment in kind will ensure the provision of premises and facilities for the new base.

Diversity and inclusion are key priorities and there is a joint aspiration that a third of all places in the first two years will be fully funded scholarship places. The Scottish Government and BBC are contributing to a bursary fund to meet scholarship costs and ensure students are drawn from a broad range of backgrounds.

The project has received strong endorsement from broadcasters and film production companies in the Scottish screen sector including STV, Channel 4, the British Film Institute (BFI) and the producers of Outlander (David Brown), Mad Max Fury Road (Iain Smith), and Sunshine on Leith and T2 Trainspotting (Andrew Macdonald).

NFTS wished to establish an operating base beyond its existing base in the South East of England to respond to the forecasted growth in the Scottish Creative Economy, and to encourage production sector capability and sustainability in Scotland especially after the announcement of the BBC’s new investment.

b) BBC Scotland Apprenticeships and Work Experience Programmes

BBC Scotland believes apprenticeships and work experience opportunities – accessible to all – are crucial for the sector.

BBC Scotland’s Apprenticeship Scheme is now in its sixth year. Launched in 2011 with John Wheatley College (now part of Glasgow Kelvin College), Skillset Scotland and Skills Development Scotland, 61 apprentices have to date completed the course and qualification – there have been no drop outs. Overall out of the 61 who have graduated – 56 have been retained in the industry or have gone on to further education courses of their choice. Another 11 apprentices joined BBC Scotland in September 2017 and will graduate in May 2018.

BBC Scotland has also committed to the establishment of a journalism trainee scheme to complement its investment in a proposed new TV channel for Scotland. The proposed new integrated news programme will present a wealth of opportunities for these trainees.
In the most recent full calendar year (2016), BBC Scotland hosted 54 school work placements and 244 senior placements, including placements for students from more than 30 universities across the UK and from 39 Scottish Secondary Schools.

c) Developing Young Online Talent

BBC Scotland’s The Social has enabled young film makers from around Scotland to be commissioned to bring their experiences to a much wider audience, fulfilling those key BBC values of entertain, educate and inform, while also learning and developing key film-making skills.

Short online content has covered a range of genres including comedy, social action and entertainment. Following success with films on wild swimming, made by Gaelic-speaking Calum Maclean, he has since been commissioned to make Dhan Uisge for BBC ALBA, and Calum has also now featured as a guest presenter on BBC One Scotland’s Landward. BBC Scotland is absolutely committed to finding and developing Scotland’s new film-making and on-air talent and The Social has provided an excellent model for this to be achieved.

d) The Writers’ Room

BBC Writersroom launched in Scotland at the beginning of 2017. There are two staff based at the BBC's offices in Pacific Quay, Glasgow.

Writersroom Scotland’s aim, alongside the rest of BBC Writersroom across the UK, is to champion new and experienced writing talent, and to support and develop writers so that they can go and create brilliant stories for the audience.

Writersroom Scotland will feed into all the pan-UK Writersroom schemes but will also create bespoke opportunities for writers from or living within Scotland. These opportunities have so far included the Scottish Writers’ Festival 2017 (a one-day event in Glasgow with over 200 attendees); River City’s residential session in June for 18 writers and the editorial team; The Break – 5 monologues for BBC Three; and Comedy Radio Shorts, a collaboration between BBC Radio Scotland and BBC Radio Ulster.

e) Working with Partners

BBC Scotland will continue to work with its existing key partners around Scotland. The BBC’s established relationships such as those with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University, the Scottish Graduate School of Arts & Humanities and of course MG ALBA are critical in working together to develop the creative industry’s workforce. BBC Scotland will also continue to seek productive and strategic relationships with further like-minded organisations.

Infrastructure, Intelligence and Maximising Benefit to Scotland

BBC Scotland notes recent developments around a film studio for Scotland, and other potential studio developments in the nation. BBC Studios has three television production centres in Scotland – in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dumbarton. BBC Studios in Scotland offers a full range of HD studio and post production facilities and production support areas tailored to programme-making requirements. Our studios
and post-production teams have a wealth of experience working across a full range of network and local productions.

BBC Scotland welcomes the potential for increased capacity in the sector. We look forward to working with all of our partners to help maximise benefits from the development of future facilities.

**Distribution, Exhibition and Audience Development**

BBC Scotland notes the discussion points on how the sector in Scotland might promote domestically produced content in the digital age, and how measures can be taken to grow the audience. We cite the example of *The Social* (above) in developing new content for Scotland’s younger audiences.

The BBC is aware of an increase in popularity for non-linear services delivered digitally. The BBC continues to develop digital propositions, but is mindful of the need for all audiences in Scotland to be able to access such services.

Meanwhile, in terms of ensuring that Scottish content continues to reach as wide an audience as possible, in addition to the proposed launch of our new channel in 2018, the BBC is also at the early stages of examining opportunities around personalisation. Information about our audiences, such as their location, friends and favourite programmes, could be used to provide a unique experience of the BBC tailored specifically to each individual. Through further developments in this area, and working with our partners, targeted Scottish content could be delivered to audiences not just in Scotland but around the UK and internationally.