



BBC and Northern Ireland Screen  
Second Partnership Agreement

April 2017

BBC AND NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN  
SECOND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

FOREWORD

This is the second partnership agreement between Northern Ireland Screen and the BBC.

Over the last two years our organisations have helped develop the screen industry in Northern Ireland into a creative powerhouse, and a thriving part of the economy. We want to build on the successes we have achieved so far<sup>1</sup>.

This new agreement seeks to expand on our work together by seeking to ensure that the real and long-term value of the BBC's spend in Northern Ireland is maximised, focusing on improving sustainability and strengthening the production supply chain.

The BBC will continue its commitment to spend a minimum of 2.9 percent of the network television budget on productions from centres across Northern Ireland, rising to 3% in 2018. This ongoing commitment – soon to be included within the BBC's operating licence – builds on a significant increase in network television production from Northern Ireland over recent years. Together, we are both very proud of the high quality and distinctive programming that we have brought to audiences across the UK as a result of the work undertaken during the first partnership agreement.

This next partnership agreement commits us to working together for a further three years to continue the good work achieved in the last two. Our focus will be on broadening the range of genres in which we produce television and digital content in Northern Ireland, and continuing to look at ways of maximising additional international investment into the industry.

In addition to the creative and economic benefits that will arise from this partnership, both the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen want to use this second partnership period to focus on ensuring that Northern Ireland is strongly represented to audiences across the UK and internationally on our screens.

Tony Hall, Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE  
BBC Director-General

Dame Rotha Johnston  
Chair, Northern Ireland Screen

*April 2017*

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## 1. CONTENT COLLABORATION

### *Portrayal*

From 2017/18 the BBC is increasing its investment in the talent and development pipeline in order to make sure we are regularly telling the stories, reflecting the lives, places and culture of all four Nations – in a way that is compelling for audiences across the UK and showcases the UK to the world.

A number of initiatives enabled by the newly launched portrayal fund will benefit Northern Ireland producers over the next three years.

Initially for 2017/18 the fund will be used to support production companies in Northern Ireland to develop local stories in Factual that can resonate across network BBC channels and to work with companies to find and develop new on-screen talent to cast into our Entertainment shows

This is in addition to a new peak-time documentary strand which will aim to include three editions commissioned from Northern Ireland each year and a dedicated BBC Writersroom to encourage new voices and writers.

Over the three year period the BBC will spend up to £1m developing and producing programme ideas across all genres with a focus on stories, people and places that resonate with Northern Ireland and can appeal to a wider audience.

### *Drama and Comedy*

The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen co-invested in seven drama projects across the two years since the announcement of the first partnership agreement, including four returnable series.

Mindful of the key role that the BBC plays in a sustainable screen sector, the BBC undertakes to maintain this level of production in Northern Ireland across the new partnership period and Northern Ireland Screen commits to providing similar levels of support based on the terms previously applied. The focus on returning series will be maintained

This production will not be limited to drama portraying Northern Ireland but it is expected, as was the case with the first partnership period, that the portfolio will include pieces that improve

the portrayal of life in Northern Ireland. The portfolio will also be weighted towards projects that require and attract further international co-financing.

Given the extensive infrastructure in Northern Ireland for the production of high end television drama, the BBC commits to seeking to place high end television drama production in Northern Ireland, and BBC Worldwide will also actively explore the potential for co-productions. Northern Ireland Screen commits to working with BBC Content and BBC Worldwide to this end.

The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen recognise the importance of local production ownership and creative talent in the long term development of a sustainable sector.

Through the 'Writers' Room' initiative, the BBC will invest a minimum of £135,000 *per year* in the development of local writing talent. In addition, through associated projects such as the TV Drama Writers' Programme, the BBC will provide a minimum of £50,000 of support in kind *per year*. Northern Ireland Screen will also invest a minimum of £100,000 *per year* in the development of production and performing talent

As part of this Agreement, BBC Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Screen will support the production of short form scripted comedy content for the BBC's digital platforms. BBC Northern Ireland will target some of the new investment announced by the Director-General on 5 April 2017 towards scripted productions for local audiences.

### *Children's and animation*

The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen co-invested in eight projects for broadcast on CBeebies or CBBC across the first partnership period. Having appointed a dedicated Children's Commissioning Executive for Scotland and Northern Ireland, the BBC will work to maintain this level of production in Northern Ireland across the new partnership period. Northern Ireland Screen commits to providing similar levels of support based on the terms previously applied.

Both the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen will take every opportunity to continue to strengthen the depth of expertise and experience in both children's drama and animation and will construct mechanisms to ensure that writers, directors, producers, Directors of Photography, animators and editors based in Northern Ireland are at the core of the sector's development.

As part of their 'Big Digital Plan for Children' Strategy, Cbeebies and CBBC will hold commissioning briefings for companies based in Northern Ireland.

### *Factual and entertainment*

The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen co-invested in a substantial entertainment format during the first Partnership Agreement. While this format was not re-commissioned by the BBC, the parties remain open to supporting a project of that scale which has potential for considerable international sales. The parties will collectively consider co-financing the development of entertainment pilots with international format potential. BBC Worldwide will also consider co-financing such pilots.

The BBC commits to commissioning a minimum of one potentially returning factual series delivering portrayal of Northern Ireland. Should the series not return, the BBC will seek to commission further programmes delivering portrayal of Northern Ireland within the partnership period.

The BBC, BBC Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Screen will also place a considerable focus on projects that have significant cultural resonance in Northern Ireland during the upcoming period of notable centenaries. The BBC commits to placing a focus on whether these projects should have a network presence beyond broadcast on BBC Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Screen will seek to work with producers to ensure that the projects also have as much exposure beyond the UK.

The BBC will brief local companies at an early stage of development on opportunities across genres, including those for landmark moments and seasons.

### *Documentary*

BBC Northern Ireland, BBC Content and Northern Ireland Screen have combined to support a considerable number of documentaries and feature documentaries with strong international appeal during the partnership period.

This has been a very successful collaboration and the parties commit to continuing to support documentaries and feature documentaries at a minimum of similar levels.

The parties welcome feature documentaries intended for festival and cinematic release and will collaborate on events or other appropriate premieres and screenings.

## **2. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Northern Ireland Screen and the BBC are committed to working together to address the ongoing development of an ever increasingly skilled production sector.

As is the case right across the UK, skills development is the critical challenge facing the ongoing successful growth of the screen industry in Northern Ireland. There is an urgent need to address skills shortages at every level of seniority within the screen industry and across every genre.

The BBC and Northern Ireland Screen have collaborated on the trainee programme AIM HIGH for some years with great success. AIM HIGH is highly valued within the Factual/Entertainment production sector in Northern Ireland and a high proportion of its alumni remain with the production community in Northern Ireland, both in the independent sector and within the BBC. Accordingly, the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen have committed to co-finance AIM HIGH 4.

This commitment will include further collaborative training schemes. It will also include ensuring that the co-financed projects offer the maximum possible opportunities for Northern Ireland resident talent and crew. In practice, this will include a formal discussion and negotiation around the maximum use of resident talent and crew on each supported project and including the production company, the relevant BBC commissioner or executive and representation from Northern Ireland Screen.

## **3. INDEPENDENT FILM**

BBC Films, BBC Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Screen and the Irish Film Board will seek to agree a framework intended to co-finance and produce two low budget films a year directed by first or second time directors utilising production companies and talent from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

#### 4. DIGITAL

Northern Ireland is home to innovative digital and games companies, some of whom have developed through support from the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen.

In this Agreement, the two parties commit to increasing digital content creation and technological innovation in Northern Ireland:

- BBC Northern Ireland will engage the local creative sector through new investment in its digital services in Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Screen will identify opportunities to co-invest in BBC-commissioned digital content and formats;
- BBC Content will hold targeted briefings to identify digital commissioning opportunities across channels and services, with a view to creating sustainable pipelines from suppliers in Northern Ireland; and
- in partnership with others, Northern Ireland Screen and the BBC will develop and co-fund training initiatives for digital content creators.

#### 5. EDUCATION

Northern Ireland Screen and the BBC both actively support the curriculum in Northern Ireland.

In this Agreement, the parties agree to maximise the impact of their commitment in this area in the following ways:

- the BBC will increase investment in online curriculum material for BBC Bitesize to support students in Northern Ireland, and will collaborate with Northern Ireland Screen on content for NI-specific GCSE courses.
- the BBC will showcase on its digital platforms content created by Moving Image Arts students; and
- the parties will collaborate to promote social inclusion and employability skills. This will include the BBC's Attainment Gap initiative, animation and coding initiatives and Make it Digital traineeships.

## 6. LANGUAGES

Northern Ireland Screen and the BBC continue to partner to fund and broadcast programmes relating to Irish Language and Ulster-Scots.

A Languages portal for programming funded through the Irish Language Broadcast Fund and the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund was envisaged within the first partnership agreement and considerable work was undertaken during the first partnership period to achieve that goal.

In this Agreement, subject to regulatory review and where rights allow, the BBC will build a collection of Irish Language and Ulster-Scots content within the BBC iPlayer – the UK's most popular online TV service, which reaches over 10m people every week.

Further, during the term of this agreement, we will keep the programmes on the iPlayer beyond the normal 30 day window. This extended availability will provide a rich cultural and learning resource for those interested in the Irish Language or Ulster-Scots.

Content will be included from Autumn 2017 with the potential to expand and deepen the collection in time through the BBC's personalisation technology.

These programmes will be appropriately rights cleared and in line with iPlayer technical standards.

In addition, the BBC will also explore ways of hosting ILBF and USBF content on its other digital services.

The BBC will continue to pursue opportunities for ILBF and USBF content to be broadcast on network BBC channels.

## 7. BBC STUDIOS

Following an extensive regulatory assessment and public consultation, BBC Studios launched as a wholly-owned commercial subsidiary in April 2017, a move supported by Government and OFCOM, and formally approved by the BBC Trust in December 2016.

BBC Studios is able to supply content to both the BBC and third party commissioners.

NI Screen acknowledges the intention that BBC Studios will operate on a similar basis to any other production company in the UK, and agrees to deal with BBC Studios on the same terms



## 8. FURTHER PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The first partnership agreement envisaged that future agreements might expand out to embrace other bodies in Northern Ireland that are engaged in activity or development that is consistent with the furtherance of the Public Purposes of the BBC.

The following have been identified as a high priority:

### *Universities*

Both the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen have developing relationships with both the Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast. Over the period of this Partnership, the parties will focus strongly on strengthening the formal links between the two universities and the screen industry including the BBC.

### *Archive*

Northern Ireland does not have a centralised moving image archive, or an agreed strategy for the preservation of and access to its history in moving image.

BBC Northern Ireland is at the forefront of archiving technology and holds the largest archive of Northern Ireland-related material. Through its Digital Film Archive, Northern Ireland Screen has developed many aspects of community outreach based on archive and is the only institution in Northern Ireland with 'Significant Collection' status from Screen Heritage UK.

BBC Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Screen will work together with other stakeholders including Public Records Office Northern Ireland, National Museums Northern Ireland and ITV to develop an archive strategy for Northern Ireland and to evaluate the options for the physical archive

## 9. TERM AND REVIEW

This second partnership agreement will cover the period April 2017 to March 2020, with a formal review at the end of the second year. It is anticipated that it will be renewed and amended at the end of the full term for a further period.

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

<sup>1</sup> Attached is a summary of projects across a range of genres that the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen have supported in the period March 2015 to March 2017

Summary of BBC Projects that the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen have supported in the period March 2015 to March 2017

GENRE	PROJECT	COMPANY	NI SCREEN £	BBC £	Levered £
DRAMA	Line of Duty 3	World Productions (Northern Ireland) Ltd			
	Line of Duty 4	World Productions (Northern Ireland) Ltd			
	The Fall Series 3	The Fall 3 Ltd			
	My Mother and Other Strangers	BBC Grafton House Productions Ltd			
	The Woman in White	Origin Pictures Ltd			
	Paula	BBC Grafton House Productions Ltd			
	Making Dad's Army	Darlow Smithson Productions Ltd			
			2,270,000	24,515,046	12,008,251
CBBC	The Secret Life of Boys Series 1	The Foundation TV Productions Ltd			
	The Secret Life of Boys Series 2	Zodiak Kids Studio UK Ltd			
	Millie Inbetween Series 2	The Foundation TV Productions Ltd			
	Millie Inbetween Series 3	Zodiak Kids Studio UK Ltd			
			579,000	5,676,320	1,501,926
CBEEBIES	The Roy Files	Jam Media (Northern Ireland) Ltd			
	Little Roy	Jam Media (Northern Ireland) Ltd			
	Pablo	Pablo Series One Ltd			
	Zogcasts	Jam Media (Northern Ireland) Ltd			
			1,036,731	4,316,202	5,366,548
FACT/ENT	Hive Minds	Green Inc Film and Television Ltd/ Saltbeef TV Ltd			
	Hive Minds Series 2	Green Inc Film and Television Ltd			
	Can't Touch This	Stellify			
			717,730	3,769,000	0
FEAT DOC & FILM	Best	Best Films Ltd			
	The Most Hated Woman in Alaska	Scarlet Gray Films Ltd			
	Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs	Fine Point Films Ltd			
	Project Children	Icebox Films Ltd t/a Alleycats Films Ltd			
	66 Days	Fine Point Films Ltd			
	Leonora Carrington – The Lost Surrealist	Erica Starling Productions			
	The Truth Commissioner	Big Fish Films			
			782,000	995,000	1,888,469
		TOTAL	£5,385,461	£39,271,568	£20,765,194

DEVELOPMENT					
GENRE	PROJECT	COMPANY	AWARD	BBC portion of budget	
DRAMA	Inspector French	Farmoor Media Ltd	15,250	15,250	
	Heartland	Hera Pictures Ltd	17,250	17,250	
FEAT DOC	Leonora Carrington	Erica Starling Productions Ltd	3,000	3,000	
	Slate - Life Patrol/Slade	Icebox Films Ltd t/a Alleycats Films Ltd	5,000	2,000	
	Slate - Circles, Liam Clarke	Erica Starling Productions Ltd	21,000	4,500	
	Slate	Erica Starling Productions Ltd	20,000	20,000	
FACT/ENT	The Dangerous Sports Club	Tern Television Productions Ltd	2,000	2,000	
	Slate - Net Jets, Mansion to Mudhut	Icebox Films Ltd t/a Alleycats Films Ltd	17,314	8,000	
	The Bridge - pilot	Potato TV - part of ITV Studios Ltd	30,000	40,000	
	The Royal	DoubleBand Films	10,000	10,000	
	The Grid	Tern Television Productions Ltd	3,000	3,000	
COMEDY	Comedy slate	Nice One Productions Ltd	11,000	11,000	
		TOTAL	154,814	136,000	

Ends

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