



ULSTER-SCOTS BROADCAST FUND DIGITAL CONTENT LANGUAGE PRODUCTION APPLICATION CALL

The Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) wishes to receive a wider range of applications that focus exclusively or predominantly on Ulster-Scots language. To facilitate this, in May 2021 the USBF supported a range of projects for development, as opposed to the production, of new language focused ideas and projects.

The USBF is now seeking digital content language production applications. The USBF is open to projects targeting different audiences, including but not limited to fluent speakers, adult learners, child learners (any key stage), the curious, including everyone in Northern Ireland who uses Ulster-Scots words or phrases, and the nostalgic, including our diaspora. Proposals could include those that seek to promote or raise awareness of Ulster-Scots as a living language, help audiences to develop knowledge and understanding of the language and/or help acquisition.

DECISION MAKING CRITERIA

The focus of the decision making will be:

1. the primacy of the Ulster-Scots language as the focus of the project;
2. clear vision of how the project will add value to knowledge and understanding of Ulster-Scots language;
3. the quality and practicality of the idea; and
4. the coherence of the use of the relevant medium to reach the targeted audience.

DIGITAL CONTENT PROJECT - CHALLENGES

It is important to note that there are 2 key challenges for digital content projects. The first challenge is the need to explain how a digital content project will reach its target audience. This requires the producer to be explicit about how they propose maximum reach/audience can be achieved. This may involve partnerships with third parties such as recognised interest groups, local councils, or organisations responsible for promoting tourism. The second is to evidence the necessary quality of the project without the benefit of a television broadcaster both ensuring and endorsing the standard of the content.

AUDIENCE REACH

Applications for digital content projects often address the question of audience reach by reference to the accessibility and power of the internet. However, a rationale that makes

the case that any website provides a global audience is not a compelling argument to the USBF. Instead, the USBF will assess the real likelihood of viewers seeking out the content and the extent to which the proposition has built in drivers of audience or is utilising portals known to attract significant audiences.

The USBF envisages that the following might represent compelling evidence that an engaged audience could be reached:

- Hosting on or linking to a portal that already reaches an identified audience;
- A built-in self-marketing dynamic that can help awareness of the project spread in a viral manner;
- With formal education content, a commitment from CCEA to make the materials available and to distribute the materials to all interested schools. In contrast, the support of individual schools or a small group of schools does not represent compelling evidence that a substantial audience could be reached; and
- Digital or web-based content that has an association with long running radio or television content has the potential to reach a substantial audience utilising cross promotion where, for example, the web address is trailing on the end of the television programme or read out on the radio programme repeatedly and regularly.

Substantial Audience

There is no single fixed definition of a 'substantial audience' although for general audience content there is some guidance in noting that the audience requirement for television broadcast content is 40,000 viewers. Digital content delivered online is capable of reaching comparable audiences.

Smaller audiences may be acceptable where the audience is highly engaged – evidenced through the interaction. For example, a content proposal that could evidence that it would be made available to every primary school in Northern Ireland and could also evidence that it had reason to expect that more than half the primary schools would actively engage with the content, would be extremely compelling despite the fact that this audience number would be approximately 11,000.

In all instances, there will be 2 aspects to assessing the substantial audience criteria; that is, the level of availability of the content, and the actual number of people likely to be reached. Once again, the availability test will be assessed on more than the content's presence on a website, but rather the extent to which an audience can be evidenced to

be clearly made aware of the content.

QUALITY OF THE PROJECT

Outside of the television broadcasting framework it is much more difficult for the USBF to satisfy itself that the quality of any given project will be of a sufficient standard.

For a digital content-related application to the USBF to be successful, it must provide compelling evidence that the quality of the project or content will be of the highest level. There is no single prescribed way of illustrating the quality of a project, but the following list may provide some guidance:

- the experience of the team involved in the project is an important factor;
- endorsement by other experienced assessors of the relevant content might also address this issue;
- in formal education, programming endorsement by CCEA that the content was directly relevant to the curriculum in a manner consistent with the general priorities of the Fund would be helpful.

LEVEL OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

Applications will be accepted for up to £50,000 which can represent up to 75% of the overall budget. Match funding of 25% of the overall budget is required. The USBF would expect to see cash and/or in kind contributions from other appropriate funders and organisations. An element of company in kind/cash funding can also be included.

Should a company wish to apply for above £50,000 then there must be a clear rationale as to why and the request should be discussed with Suzanne Harrison, Funding Manager before an application is submitted.

It is expected that supported digital content projects will be free to use for the end user and as such, a revenue model for exploitation is not expected nor required.

TIME FRAME

All applications must be received by **5pm on Friday 3rd December 2021**. All applications will be assessed with decisions intended to be made by the **end of January 2022**.



APPLICATION

Please contact Suzanne Harrison, Funding Manager (suzanne@northernirelandscreen.co.uk), to discuss a potential application before applying. After this discussion, a link to the online application form will be sent out.

All applicants must complete an online application form. Please ensure that all supporting documentation is submitted either online with your application or via email to the USBF (usbf@northernirelandscreen.co.uk).

Failure to provide the requested supporting documentation will result in your application being eliminated from the call.