



PRESS RELEASE

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RIG puts case to BBC Trust on BBC Radio Commissioning

The Radio independents Group today formally submitted its proposals to the BBC Trust's current Review of Radio Network Supply.

RIG's submission lays out the case to the BBC Trust for sustaining and increasing the BBC's already fruitful relationship with the independent radio and audio production sector.

These proposals include:

- Phasing in an increase of the level of overall independent radio commissioning (currently around 8.4% of total network hours), through a combination of a higher quota and a Window of Creative Competition. Such a system currently operates for BBC Television commissioning, where a statutory quota of 25% is augmented by an additional 25% open to indies via the Window of Creative Competition
- Ensuring that there is a demonstrably meritocratic, regulated system for all radio commissioning
- Appointing an indie radio 'champion' to represent independents within the BBC

RIG Chair Mike Hally said:

"Programmes from 'Fighting Talk' through the 'Radio 2 Folk Awards' to 'Gardener's Question Time' demonstrate how indie productions successfully fit into and boost the BBC's schedules. We would like the Trust to work with the BBC to ensure the licence fee payer has access to the full extent of creativity and talent available in our sector".

RIG Vice Chair Phil Critchlow, who alongside Simon Cole (UBC Media), Jez Nelson (Somethin' Else) and Mark Goodier (Wise Buddah), has been leading talks with the BBC Trust and others, added:

"This review, combined our ongoing positive talks with BBC management, provides a great opportunity to reassure the BBC Trust and Executive that radio indies have the capacity, the experience and the talent to bring much more value to the Corporation than is presently the case."

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NOTES

1. The Radio Independents Group (RIG) was formed in 2004 to provide a voice for independent production companies supplying the BBC and commercial radio. Its membership is comprised of some 97 companies. This includes the major suppliers for Radios 1, 2 3 and 5; the majority of those on the Radio 4 Registered Suppliers list; as well as the World Service, digital channels and so on. We believe this represents around two-thirds of the independents actively producing at this level.
2. The BBC Trust is currently carrying out a review of BBC network radio supply, “to ensure that the BBC commissions a suitable proportion, range and diversity of its radio programmes from external producers” (BBC Trust Statement, 9 February 2010). The Review is being informed by an independent survey of the sector, which will be studied, alongside RIG’s own policy submission, by the BBC Trust’s Audiences and Performances Committee, chaired by David Liddiment. The Trust is expected to finally report in the autumn of 2010.
3. Current BBC Quotas:
 - The BBC currently has a statutory 25% quota for commissioning independent TV productions, plus a further 25% is open to indies via the Window of Creative Competition (WoCC)
 - BBC Online currently operates a voluntary 25% independent production quota
 - In contrast the BBC only operates a 10% voluntary quota for radio, comprised of ‘eligible hours’ which, according to RIG’s calculations, means it only in reality commissions around 8.4% of total network radio hours from independents

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