



# BBC's Proposed Gaelic Digital Service – Consultation on Simplified Approach to Ofcom's Market Impact Assessment

Consultation

Publication date: 16 August 2007

Closing Date for Responses: 7 September 2007



## Introduction

1.1 The BBC is proposing, in partnership with the Gaelic Media Service (GMS), the following service called the Gaelic Digital Service (GDS):

- A dedicated digital TV channel in Gaelic – on-air for up to seven hours per day (concentrated in, but not confined to, late afternoons and evenings). This would comprise 1.5 hours per day of originated programming (including existing output from the BBC), narrative repeats and archive content. The service may also draw on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal as a sustaining service when the TV channel is off-air. There would also be significantly enhanced Gaelic content for users of [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk).
- The channel will offer Gaelic-language news and weather as well as a wide range of other genres, including comedy and drama as resources permit. A total of 1.5 hours of original content (either original production or reversioned foreign language shows) will be provided on a daily basis. Until switchover, this will include the two hours commissioned weekly for the BBC2 Gaelic zone.
- At least half of the programme fund contributed by GMS will be spent in the independent sector.
- A dedicated Gaelic-language digital TV channel offered in 2008 initially on satellite and broadband, and cable TV across the UK later that year. After digital switchover, the service will also be offered on digital terrestrial TV (Scotland only) and at this time, regular Gaelic programming will be withdrawn from BBC2.
- Subject to the completion of this PVT by Christmas and consequent BBC Trust approval, it is expected that the service would launch before the end of March 2008.
- The service would be licensed and regulated by the BBC Trust, and would be subject also to Ofcom regulation to the same extent as any other BBC service. The BBC proposes to manage the service jointly with GMS, although ultimate responsibility for editorial standards would rest with the Director-General of the BBC.

The full service description for this offering can be found via the following link:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/framework/public\\_value\\_test/index.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/framework/public_value_test/index.html)

1.2 This document asks for views to allow Ofcom to assess whether it should be undertaking a simplified form of the market impact assessment process (MIA) for new BBC licence-fee funded services and substantial changes to existing services. Please note that if this consultation raises issues, Ofcom will follow the more normal process and longer timetable for an MIA including more extensive information gathering from stakeholders. In this event, a full MIA would inevitably cause some delay to the planned launch of the GDS. We are keen to receive the views of stakeholders whose businesses may be directly affected by the GDS and those who have a cultural or political interest in the Gaelic language. The key issue Ofcom needs to understand is what services, current or planned, are likely to be affected by the GDS and what will be the nature of these impacts.

1.3 Important notes:

- 1.3.1 We are proposing to share responses with the BBC Trust unless respondents indicate otherwise. If you would prefer us not to share your MIA response, please prepare a separate MIA response document and clearly indicate on the cover that it is for Ofcom only.
- 1.3.2 Please ensure that any comments you have on the Public Value Assessment of the new service proposals (as opposed to the MIA) are sent separately to the BBC Trust.
- 1.3.3 Ofcom does not intend to publish MIA responses on its website. However, it may wish to refer to individual responses in its report of findings, which is likely to be published late 2007. If any parts of your response are confidential, and should not be referred to in the Ofcom report, please indicate that clearly in your response. It would be helpful if any confidential material were included in a separate annex, together with an indication of why it is regarded as confidential.
- 1.4 In providing Ofcom with your views it would be useful, whenever possible, to support your response with any evidence you might have readily available.
- 1.5 Deadline for responses is 5pm 7<sup>th</sup> September 2007. Responses should be either emailed to [alan.stewart@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:alan.stewart@ofcom.org.uk) or mailed to:
- Alan Stewart  
Ofcom (Scotland)  
Sutherland House  
149 St Vincent Street  
Glasgow  
G2 5NW
- 1.6 If you have any queries regarding the MIA, please contact Alan Stewart at the above email address in the first instance. If you have any queries regarding the BBC's proposed service, please email Michael McLaren ([michael.mclaren@bbc.co.uk](mailto:michael.mclaren@bbc.co.uk)) at the BBC or Donald Campbell at the GMS ([domhnall@gms.org.uk](mailto:domhnall@gms.org.uk))
- 1.7 Ofcom takes care to fulfil its Gaelic language responsibilities and is providing Gaelic versions of the terms of reference and this consultation document. However due to time and resource considerations it would be helpful if responses to this consultation could be made in English.

### **Proposal to undertake a simplified form of MIA**

- 1.8 If a proposed service is unlikely to have significant market impacts then Ofcom may with the consent of the Joint Steering Group (JSG) choose to follow a simplified form of the MIA process. This process is set out in Ofcom's MIA Methodology which you can find at: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/bbcmias/statement/statement.pdf>. It enables the MIA to be completed in a shorter time-frame than the full MIA, involves limited additional information gathering and also means Ofcom will undertake less detailed analysis.
- 1.9 In order to answer the question of whether to undertake the simplified form of the MIA process we would appreciate your views on the GDS and its likely market impact. Please mention positive as well as negative impacts.

- 1.10 Secondly, do you agree that the overall market impact of the GDS is likely to be small? Regardless of whether your answer is positive or negative, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence where possible. In answering this question, please consider the following more detailed questions.

### **Views from business stakeholders (including community and voluntary services)**

- 1.11 Do you consider that any of the services you currently provide will be affected by the GDS? It would be useful to know what characteristics of the GDS you think may have the largest effect on your customers' or consumers' behaviour and how you might react if you were told that the GDS will launch in March 2008. How important are the services that could be affected by the GDS to your overall business? Will the importance of these services change over time?
- 1.12 How critical are these services that could be affected by the GDS to your future plans? Please explain your answers. Do you have plans to expand the supply of services that would be affected by the GDS? Please, briefly describe those services and their stage of development. Do you have plans to launch new services that you think will be impacted by the BBC's new on-demand proposals? What would be the likely impact of the GDS on your expansion or introduction of services? Please also consider the impact your decision would have on your current services and ability to supply them.
- 1.13 Ofcom would also be keen to know about your awareness of the GDS – when you heard about it and what you knew about it. In any plans for new services did you take account of the possibility that the GDS would be launched at some point in the future?

### **Views from cultural and political stakeholders**

- 1.14 Are you aware of any services currently provided in the Gaelic community, which may be impacted by the launch of the GDS (this includes voluntary as well as commercial organisations)? If so, please specify and provide brief reasons for your response? For each of the services you mention, what do you think are the likely impacts the GDS will have on these services/ associated companies?
- 1.15 Are you aware of any future services which may be impacted by the launch of the GDS? If so, what are they and what is the likely impact of the GDS for them?
- 1.16 We would also be interested in your views on the questions posed above in 1.13.