

Scottish Chambers of Commerce

Ofcom Review of Public Sector Broadcasting

Consultation Response

4 December 2008

Question 1: Do you agree that public service provision and funding beyond the BBC is an important part of any future system?:

Yes. Competition in the provision of public service broadcasting is essential both for the maintenance of high quality programming and in order to maximise business opportunities in the broadcasting industry. Scotland has great potential to develop a strong base of independent broadcasting and production, contributing significantly to the Scottish economy. In order to achieve this potential, it is essential that a critical mass of both BBC and non-BBC is maintained and expanded upon.

Question 2: Which of the three refined models do you think is most appropriate?:

Of the three models outlined by Ofcom, Scottish Chambers of Commerce believes that the enhanced Evolution model offers the best prospect of maintaining a strong and competitive creative economy within Scotland, and delivering focused public service broadcasting reflecting Scotland's unique legal and political status within the United Kingdom.

Question 3: Do you agree that in any future model Channel 4 should have an extended remit to innovate and provide distinctive UK content across platforms? If so, should it receive additional funding directly, or should it have to compete for funding?:

Scottish Chambers of Commerce does not have a specific view on the future remit and funding of Channel 4.

Question 4: Do you think ITV1, Five and Teletext should continue to have public service obligations after 2014? Where ITV1 has an ongoing role, do you agree that the Channel 3 licensing structure should be simplified, if so what form of licensing would be most appropriate?:

We support the public service obligations of ITV1, Five and Teletext. In terms of Channel 3 licensing, we believe that the individual needs of Scotland must be recognised as different from England and its regions.

Question 5: What role should competition for funding play in future? In which areas of content? What comments do you have on our description of how this might work in practice?:

Scottish Chambers of Commerce has not taken a view on the future funding of UK broadcasting in general.

Question 6: Do you agree with our findings that nations and regions news continues to have an important role and that additional funding should be provided to sustain it?:

Nations and regions news does have a crucial role in broadcasting, particularly in Scotland where our separate political and legal systems require to be fully reflected in news coverage at a local level. This should cover all parts of Scotland including the Border television area.

Question 7: Which of the three refined models do you think is most appropriate in the devolved nations?:

The refined Evolution model is most appropriate for the devolved nations, including Scotland. A one size fits all London-based ITV covering the whole of the UK is not appropriate for the needs of Scottish audiences or advertisers. Account must also be taken of the role STV currently has in contributing to Scotland's unique cultural and artistic communities.

Question 8: Do you agree with our analysis of the future potential for local content services?:

STV has demonstrated in Scotland the potential for local content services with its localised news coverage in four Scottish regions together with local advertising opportunities. The contribution made by STV in developing these and other services should be fully recognised in Ofcom's review. The findings of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission must form a full part of this review, particularly with regard to the aspiration for a new digital channel for Scotland. Consideration must be given to solutions in order to ensure that the Borders TV area receives Scottish-specific news content.

Question 9: Do you agree with our assessment of each possible funding source, in terms of its scale, advantages and disadvantages?:

Scottish Chambers of Commerce has not taken a view on the future funding of UK broadcasting in general.

Question 10: What source or sources of funding do you think are most appropriate for the future provision of public service content beyond the BBC?:

Scottish Chambers of Commerce has not taken a view on the future funding of UK broadcasting in general.

Question 11: Which of the potential approaches to funding for Channel 4 do you favour?:

Scottish Chambers of Commerce does not have a specific view on the future remit and funding of Channel 4.

Question 12: Do you agree that our proposals for 'tier 2' quotas affecting ITV plc, stv, UTV, Channel TV, Channel 4, Five and Teletext are appropriate, in the light of our analysis of the growing pressure on funding and audiences? priorities? If not, how should we amend them, and what evidence can you provide to support your alternative?:

Scottish Chambers of Commerce supports STV's commitment to maintain news programmes at current levels. However additional public funding may be necessary to maintain a suitable level of non-news PSB.