

BROADCASTING COMMITTEE

BCC(3)-02-08 (p3) - 21 April 2008

TAC - Submission to Assembly Broadcasting Committee: April 08

1..TAC - Teledwyr Annibynnol Cymru

TAC is the trade association that represents the interests of television, film, and new media producers in Wales. Formed in 1982 as a response to the advent of S4C it provides it's members with business affairs, industrial relations, and representative and lobbying services. TAC currently has over 30 members who have a combined turnover of over £100million.

2..Background

This paper is submitted on behalf of our membership to the Broadcasting Committee of the Assembly. TAC would ask the Committee to note the following:

The contents of the OFCOM Second Public Service Broadcasting Review

The PACT Production Trend Report for Out of London available at

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http://www.pact.co.uk/uploads/file_bank/asset_3087.pdf

The S4C Economic Impact Report 2002-2006 available at

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http://www.s4c.co.uk/abouts4c/corporate/c_econrep.shtml

3. Purpose

TAC would assert the following in relation to both the Assembly Broadcasting Committee and the OFCOM Second Public Service Broadcasting Review.

The economic and cultural importance of PSB to Wales

The importance of maintaining a plurality of supply of news and non-news programming in Wales

The importnace of competition in the supply of PSB services

The economic and cultural value of original and Wales originated programming and content

The low penetration of Wales originated content on UK Network television

These points as well as recommendatrions are further developed below.

4. Economic and Cultural Importance of PSB and plurality of supply.

Would wish to note the value of the current arrangements regarding both S4C and BBC to Wales

Other than that elaborated below we do not envisage the need for change in the manner that S4C and BBC in Wales are funded.

We would note that the current situation regarding the position of ITV Wales causes us concern. Particularly as they are the only supplier of news outside the BBC (which supplies news programmes to S4C)

We are also deeply concerned regarding the non-news requirement of ITV which has been reduced for 2009 from 4 to 3 hours per week. We believe this has implications for Wales originated programming in English that reflects Wales. Any further erosion of the PSB requirement should be rejected.

Our membership view the non-news hours on ITV Wales as a distinctive and valuable opportunity to produce English language programmes about Wales for a Welsh audience

TAC would assert that the current PSB requirement for both news and non-news hourson ITV should be retained.

5. Importance of Competition in Supply of PSB Services

Whilst TAC does not have particular preference for any prescribed model of future funding of PSB we would stress the importance of competition in the supply of PSB services particularly as both DSO and the migration to new delivery platforms become reality.

In Wales we would stress that future competition in the supply of PSB services would require a plural and diverse marketplace for PSB content particularly in the English language. The role of ITV in any future PSB provision cannot be discounted and should be considered as part of any new funding model for PSB delivery.

6. The economic and cultural value of original and Wales originated content

TAC would note the valuable economic and cultural contribution that the PSB broadcasters have made to Welsh life and that ensuring the future vitality of these services should inform the Committee's conclusions on broadcasting in Wales.

Any future model for the funding of S4C or BBC in Wales should consider potential impact on the market for and supply of Wales originated production of programmes and content. Increasing plurality and competition in the supply of programming and content should be a policy priority.

S4C and the BBC are major investors in the programme supply sector in Wales which has been a significant driver of economic growth and employment in Wales. As one of the Assembly's priority sectors for growth the future investment of the PSB broadcaster's in the sector is instrumental in building a sector that is competitive in UK network and international markets.

Again TAC would assert the future importance of the ITV PSB obligation, particularly in non-news programming, for the future health of the programme supply sector.

TAC estimates that as many as 20 independent sector companies have supplied programmes to ITV Wales under the non-news PSB obligations in the past 12 months. We estimate that this is a combined investment in programming from the independent sector of c. £1.5m. TAC would note the success of series such as "Fishlock's Wild Tracks "and "Great Pubs of Wales "in attracting significant audience shares (c.200,000 viewers). ITV estimated investment of £1.5m represents a comparatively low financial investment in quality PSB programming with a high audience. TAC believes that ITV is very effective in meeting PSB obligations at low cost and the requirement for non-news programming to reflect Wales should be retained.

7. The low penetration of Wales originated content on UK Network television

TAC asks the Committee to note the results of the PACT Out of London Production Trend Report

As the issue of Nations and Regions programming is to be examined in greater depth in the second phase of the OFCOM PSB Review TAC would request of the Assembly that it would be appropriate, beyond the timescale of the current Committee, that the Assembly consult stakeholders in Wales regarding an Assembly response to the Second Phase of the review when it will be possible to explore these issues in greater depth.

TAC would recommend that the Assembly, either under the auspices of the Economic or Culture Committee, open dialogue with OFCOM, the network broadcasters and the industry as to how the issue of Wales' low network penetration may be addressed.