

**Expression of Interest**

**BBC Sounds Audio Lab 2025**

1. **Introduction**

BBC Sounds Audio Lab is an ‘accelerator’ programme designed to amplify emerging podcasters and audio creatives across the UK. We ‘embed’ successful applicants into BBC and independent production teams to develop new skills whilst creating distinctive podcasts. This initiative provides creators with a unique ‘large platform’ show case to aid their career development whilst also complementing the Sounds content offer, and supporting the BBC’s Value For All strategy and Across the UK initiative.

In 2025, Audio Lab enters its fourth year with its alumni continuing to develop their careers in audio roles whilst being recognised for their achievements. They have won some of the sector’s most coveted awards including Gold from ARIA 2023; Gold from APA 2023 and Gold & Silver awards from BPA in 2024.

The second year Audio Lab podcasts were released in February 2024, you can listen to them here:

[Nowhere](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p0h9wxmz) by May Robson

[Black Gold](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p0h9wdf6) by George Powell

[Sacred Money](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p0hb1gq8) by Taqwa Sadiq

[Hometown Boring](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p0hb189w) by Anouska Lewis

[Seun's Talking Drum British and West African](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p0h9x7pv) by Seun Matiluko

For 2025, Audio Lab is offering 4 salaried 7 month Podcast Creator roles - embedded in experienced audio production teams across the UK.

We are now seeking applications from production companies from across the UK.

1. **Purpose**

We are looking to commission 4 production companies via this Expression of Interest to:

* support the outreach, recruitment and selection of a Creator as part of a BBC Audio Lab ad campaign in Feb 2025.
* host and provide support to the selected Audio Lab Creator from Jul 2025 to Jan 2026
* lead the development, production and delivery by Jan 2026 of a podcast series from the idea provided by the selected Creator.

1. **Timeline**

* **Stage 1 - Expression of Interest**
  + 30th Sept Expression of Interest shared
  + 21st Oct Closing date
* **Stage 2 - Shortlisting**
  + w/b 28th Oct Shortlisted production companies contacted and invited to pitch meeting
* **Stage 3 – Pitch Meeting, Selection and Offer**
  + w/b 18th Nov Pitch meetings take place
  + w/b 2nd Dec Successful production companies confirmed.

1. **Budget**

The BBC will provide a maximum guide budget of between £25,000-£30,000 (inclusive of editorial ambition). The budget includes all production costs and creator support roles. The Creator salary is paid for by BBC Sounds directly. Further information on the budget and editorial spec will be provided following the selection of the Creator and their idea.

1. **Evaluation process**

Expressions of Interest received by 5.00pm on 21st Oct 2024 and that meet the mandatory criteria (Part A), will be evaluated using the application answers in Parts B and C to create a shortlist. Each answer in Part C will be scored from 1 to 10 where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent (measuring how well questions are answered). Scores are multiplied by the weight of each question with all weighted scores added to determine the final application score. The 4 production companies that score the highest will be selected, in the event of a tie we will ask for additional information to re-evaluate in order to arrive at the final selection.

Production companies will be informed if they are on the shortlist in the week beginning 28th Oct and sent an invitation to a pitch meeting. Pitch meetings will take place in the week beginning 18th Nov.

Production companies will be notified of the outcome of their applications, however as we expect a high level of interest, feedback will not be provided at this stage of the process. We envisage shortlisting up to approx 8 production companies.

Those production companies that attend a pitch meeting will be given feedback following the selection of the successful companies.

The successful companies will be notified in the week beginning 2nd Dec 2024.

1. **Mandatory Criteria for production companies**

To be eligible to apply for the Expression of Interest you must meet all (if applicable) of the following criteria (see Part A below):

* be a registered BBC supplier (for details see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/commissioners/becoming-a-supplier/>)
* be able to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion, including having a diverse staff team or a network of freelancers and being able to demonstrate experience in delivering recent content for diverse audiences. (For details see [Diversity & Inclusion - Radio Commissioning (bbc.co.uk)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/diversity-inclusion/)
* have signed up to the Equality in Audio Pact
* are able to demonstrate sustainability good practice – minimising negative environmental impacts (e.g. from energy, waste, travel) and where possible making a positive contribution (e.g. completed Albert certification)
* have been vetted by the BBC for Health & Safety in the last 3 years
* confirm if there are any actual or potential conflicts of interest arising as a consequence of this submission
* have insurance for employer’s liability (minimum level of £5m per occurrence), public liability (minimum level of £1m per occurrence)
* will pay the Real Living Wage in the production of the programme
* confirm that all workers on the production are 18 years old or over
* confirm that in the past 5 years, in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, your organisation (or any of your directors) has not been subject to insolvency or bankruptcy procedures
* are able to work within the timelines set out in this document
* have an office space where the Creator can work within an audio production team
* have at least 5 staff or regular freelancers working within audio production
* have a hybrid working policy where 2 to 3 days a week audio staff are based in the office
* have produced and published 2 podcast series in the last 12 months

1. **General**

* **Bid costs** - All costs incurred directly or indirectly in responding to this expression of interest will be borne wholly by the responding production company. The BBC will not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of a response to this expression of interest.
* **Acceptance/Rejection** - The BBC reserves the right to accept or to reject any offer/response (or part of an offer/response) and to annul the process and reject all responses at any time prior to selecting the winning production company, without incurring any liability to the affected production company.
* **Modification** - The BBC may modify any part of this expression of interest document at any time prior to the deadlines for receipt of submissions. Any such amendment will be notified in writing to all production companies. To allow time for such amendment to be taken into account, the BBC may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for receipt of submissions. Production companies may modify their submissions prior to the deadline for receipt by notifying the BBC in writing and resubmitting documentation. No submission may be modified after the deadline for receipt.
* **Exclusion** - The BBC reserves the right to exclude any production company that is found to: have breached any of the terms outlined in this expression of interest document or provide information which is untrue.
* **Confidentiality** - Any information provided to the BBC in response to this brief will be treated as confidential, however, please note that the BBC may need to share information with their advisers to the decision-making process. Equally, any information provided by the BBC to the producers should be treated as confidential (except where indicated otherwise).  Information exchange is subject to the non-disclosure agreement (“NDA”) that producers have signed with the BBC as part of this process.
* **Publicity** -Producers shall not, without the prior consent of the BBC, make any reference to the BBC in any advertising, promotional or published material, nor speak in public about the BBC or their affairs in connection with this EOI.
* **Use of Logos** - Producers must not use or reproduce any BBC logos or otherwise make reference to the same without the prior consent of the BBC, other than to the extent required in order to prepare a response to the EOI.
* **Inducement-** The offering of inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other contract with the BBC will automatically disqualify a producer and may constitute a criminal offence.
* **Warranties-**The producer warrants that the concepts submitted as part of the proposal (in whole or in part) do not infringe any third parties rights and agrees to indemnify the BBC against any and all claims resulting from the use of these concepts.
* **Freedom of Information** - As a public authority, the BBC is required to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”), which came into force on 1st January 2005.  FOIA is intended to deliver greater accountability for decisions and spending across the whole of the public sector. It requires public authorities to strike the balance between achieving transparency and protecting genuinely confidential or commercially sensitive information.  Producers should be aware that, under an FOIA request, the BBC may be required to disclose information contained within any of the responses or future contractual information. Following a request, the BBC may take the views of organisations submitting proposals into account when deciding on what information will be disclosed.   If you would like further information on the Freedom of Information Act please see:  <http://www.bbc.co.uk/foi/>
* **Due** **Diligence -**The BBC reserves the right to perform any appropriate due diligence (including but not limited to health and safety assessments and/or or financial due diligence) at any stage of the EOI process prior to the award of a final contract to a production company. The production company will provide all assistance required in order to achieve this.
* **Notifications -**The BBC will notify the preferred production companies in writing.  If agreement is reached with the preferred production companies, then the BBC will notify the unsuccessful production companies as soon as reasonably practical, and the contracts will be awarded to the successful production companies.
* **BBC Contract Terms –** Any BBC Contract resulting from the EOI will be between the BBC and the successful production company. The contract and terms of trade will be supplied at offer stage.
* **Contract Extension** - BBC Sounds Audio Lab may extend the contract period for a further year subject to review and agreement, upon similar contract terms. Upon review, the BBC Sounds Audio Lab will also have the right to terminate and/or takeover, if it determines in its absolute discretion that the delivery of the Programme by the Producer has undermined the quality and/or integrity of the Programme and/or the brand.

1. **Application Requirements**

Complete your answers for Parts A, B and C in a Word or equivalent document only. No audio submissions are required.

Please copy the questions as set out below and add your answers following each question. Give your full company name, the main contact person, email and contact phone number the top of the page. Title your Word document (or equivalent) file with the full name of your company followed by Audio Lab 2025.

**Part A**

**Confirm the following mandatory criteria (if applicable) by answering Yes or No to each point and providing further information as required.**

1. You are a registered BBC supplier.
2. You can demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion.
3. You have signed up to the Equality in Audio Pact.
4. You can demonstrate a commitment to sustainability.
5. You have been vetted by the BBC for Health & Safety in the last 3 years.
6. Are there are any actual or potential conflicts of interest arising as a consequence of this submission.
7. Do you have insurance for production, employer’s liability, public liability and E&O.
8. You will pay the Real Living Wage in the production of the programme.
9. Are all workers on the production are 18 years old or over.
10. In the past 5 years, in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, has your organisation (or any of your directors) been subject to insolvency or bankruptcy procedures
11. You are able to work within the timelines set out in this document.
12. You have an office space where the Creator can work within an audio production team.
13. You have at least 5 staff or regular freelancers working within audio production.
14. You have a hybrid working policy where 2 to 3 days a week audio staff are based in the office.
15. You have produced and published 2 podcast series in the last 12 months.

**Part B**

**Please ensure you answer these questions as fully as possible as they will have an impact on the shortlisting process.**

1. List the podcast titles and content genres; formats and/or style of audio you have significant experience of producing.
2. Provide the address of your existing office location(s) where you can host the Creator

**Part C**

1. Provide details of a recent podcast or audio programme that successfully delivered distinctive content for all audiences or a specific target audience. Please provide a link to the podcast or audio programme. (**300 word maximum**)

This question has a **40% evaluation weighting**.

1. Tell us how your company meets two out of the three diversity criteria. (**250 word maximum**) This question has a **30% evaluation weighting**.
2. diverse stories and portrayals, covering the nine protected characteristics plus social mobility
3. diverse production leadership - where ‘diverse’ includes ethnicity, socio-economic background and disability.
4. diverse company leadership - where ‘diverse’ includes ethnicity, socio-economic background and disability.

For the full definitions supporting each priority and FAQs see links below:

[Diversity & Inclusion - Radio Commissioning (bbc.co.uk)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/diversity-inclusion/)

[Diversity & Inclusion £12m Targeted Investment FAQs - Radio Commissioning (bbc.co.uk)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/diversity-inclusion-12m-targeted-investment-faqs/)

1. a. Tell us how you attract and recruit diverse, emerging talent to your company.
2. Tell us what experience you have of developing new and up and coming talent through the production process to grow their skills, experience and careers.

Please include the people and processes you have in place to deliver this and examples of your success.

(**250 word maximum**). This question has a **30% evaluation weighting**.

**Application Submission**

Send us your Expression of Interest in a Word (or equivalent) document of no more than **3 sides of A4** in font size 11 to: [AudioLab@bbc.co.uk](mailto:AudioLab@bbc.co.uk).

Title your document file with the full name of your company and Audio Lab 2025.

Start your document with the full name of your company, company address, named contact, email and contact number.

The deadline for Expression of Interests to be emailed is 5.00pm on Mon 21st Oct 2024.

If you have further questions, please email [AudioLab@bbc.co.uk](mailto:AudioLab@bbc.co.uk).

**Thank you**

**BBC Sounds Audio Lab**