

**Voice of the Listener & Viewer  
The Old Rectory Business Centre  
Springhead Road, Northfleet  
Kent, DA11 8HN**

Tel: 01474 338716

email: [info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk)

VLV: [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk)

**VLV RESPONSE TO THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE'S CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

**FUTURE FUNDING OF THE BBC WORLD SERVICE**

**May 2024**

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE VLV

The Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) is an independent, not for profit membership-based charity, free from political and sectarian affiliations. VLV supports high quality broadcasting which maintains the democratic and cultural traditions of the UK. We support the independence and integrity of the BBC and encourage work which demonstrates commitment to the principles of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB). VLV is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales No 4407712 - Charity No 1152136).

### **Executive Summary**

1. VLV commends the BBC World Service for its provision of high quality content for audiences around the world. VLV considers that the World Service provides significant soft power benefits for the UK and should be fully supported by Government in its work which is more vital than ever today. The World Service is recognised by many as being one of Britain's greatest soft power tools. The elements of soft power to which the World Service contributes are international influence due to its significant reach, increased trust in and credibility for the UK, the promotion of freedom of speech, especially in countries where free speech is constrained, the reinforcement of democratic processes and human rights, countering disinformation, promotion of the English language and connecting the diaspora communities of the UK.
2. However, VLV has long had concerns about the World Service being funded by licence fee income. VLV has conducted analysis into the BBC's public funding which shows that in real terms BBC public funding has declined by 34% since 2010<sup>1</sup>. Since then the BBC has been forced to take on the cost of items which previously were funded by central Government, such as the World Service. We do not consider that the World Service should be funded by income derived from the TV Licence which was originally intended to fund services for UK audiences. VLV considers that the licence fee should only cover the costs of services designed to benefit the UK population through its domestic services, providing full value for money to those who pay for it.
3. From available evidence and commentary it appears to VLV that funding and support for international broadcasters produced by countries like China, the US, France, and Russia have seen significant growth in recent years. Declines in press freedom and gaps in media regulations have reduced democratic resilience and created greater opportunities in recent years. These countries all appear to be increasing investment, strategic narrative promotion, and digital adaptation, tailored to their respective geopolitical goals and cultural strategies.
4. There are a number of potential funding models for the World Service. It is clear that each funding model has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Since there is no ideal option, the VLV would recommend that the Government funds the World Service directly as it did before it changed the funding model in 2014.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://vlv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/VLV-BBC-Public-Funding-Analysis-2010-2023-all-years.pdf>

## **Introduction**

5. VLV welcomes the opportunity to respond to this inquiry which focuses on the BBC's offering to ODA eligible countries and the positive influence of the service as part of the UK's soft power.
6. VLV works to represent British citizens' interests in broadcasting. In making this submission we are primarily concerned with the impact the World Service has on audiences in the UK.
7. VLV has conducted analysis into the BBC's public funding which shows that in real terms BBC public funding has declined by 34% since 2010<sup>2</sup>. Since then the BBC has been forced to take on the cost of items which previously were funded by central Government, such as the World Service.
8. VLV considers that this has undermined the BBC's ability to maintain services for audiences in the UK who fund it. We believe the licence fee should only cover the costs of services designed to benefit the UK population through its domestic services, providing full value for money to those who pay for it. Other services, such as the World Service or social policy (such as providing free licences to the over 75's), should be funded by central Government. The 'top-slicing' of BBC income to fund purposes other than BBC provision for UK audiences may have played some part in the decline in the number of licence fee payers in recent years and VLV believes this approach, to use TV Licence income to fund purposes other than BBC domestic services, should be reconsidered or it could undermine the sustainability of the BBC as a whole.
9. It is VLV's view that the World Service is likely to require increased funding in coming years to address its needs, especially given the rapid changes in media consumption and technology. Sustainable financial support, whether from public funding, grants, partnerships, or commercial activities, will be crucial to meeting these demands. If its budget is not maintained, the BBC will be forced to implement further cuts to staffing and services. This could lead to a decline in the volume of original content, with more repeats used to fill air time. If funding is not increased at least in line with inflation, the BBC will have to further cut the number of World Service staff, leading to a potential reduction in the quality and even the accuracy of content. It is possible that the BBC will be forced to close some language services.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Question 1: What contribution does the BBC World Service make to the development goals around the world and in ODA eligible countries in-particular?**

10. VLV does not have the expertise to comment on the World Service's contribution to the development goals, although we welcome the positive contribution the World Service makes by providing trustworthy, reliable content for populations around the world. We

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://vlv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/VLV-BBC-Public-Funding-Analysis-2010-2023-all-years.pdf>

echo Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General's description of the World Service as quite possibly "Britain's greatest gift to the World in the 20th Century"<sup>3</sup>.

11. We believe this contribution is vital, especially in countries where there is no free press or media coverage is constrained by government censorship. This is crucial for the UK's standing and regard worldwide as well as beneficial for audiences around the world.

## **Question 2: What soft power advantages does the World Service provide for the UK and the projection of its values?**

12. VLV considers that the World Service provides significant soft power benefits for the UK and should be fully supported by Government in its work which is more vital than ever today. The World Service is recognised by many as being one of Britain's greatest soft power tools.

13. The BBC defines the characteristics which are fundamental to its role in the UK's soft power<sup>4</sup>:

'The World Service makes a global contribution to the BBC's mission to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain.

In particular, the World Service contributes to the BBC's international news mission by seeking to address the global gap in the provision of trusted international news, by providing accurate, impartial and independent news and programming of the highest quality, tailored to its audience's need, and maximise reach of all services in their target markets, subject to value for money. In doing so, the World Service aims to provide journalism that contributes to accountability and good governance, to improve the welfare and economic development of citizens in developing countries.'

14. The BBC World Service plays a significant role in enhancing the UK's soft power and projecting its values globally. Research shows that because the BBC and the World Service are closely associated with the UK, this leads to reputational benefit and positive perceptions of the UK as a whole around the world<sup>5</sup>. The BBC is one of the best known brands around the world. The Soft Power 30 index identifies the BBC World Service as one of the major institutions which provides the UK with soft power<sup>6</sup>. In its 2019 report it said, 'The UK continues to cultivate British soft power through major institutions like the British Council and BBC World Service'. In a general sense, increasing international awareness of the UK and promoting understanding of our values, history, people and aspirations leads to greater sympathy for, trust in and standing for the UK.

15. The 2024 Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index says, 'The United Kingdom defends 2nd position with a Global Soft Power Index score of 71.8, improving on 67.3 in the previous year. Maintaining its standing in the top 3 for Familiarity and Influence, and this year also achieving an all-time high of 4th rank in Reputation, the United Kingdom consistently demonstrates a round profile. It also continues to dominate in 'strong

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmcaff/writev/849/ws25.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/managementstructure/structureandgovernance/world\\_service\\_licence.pdf](https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/managementstructure/structureandgovernance/world_service_licence.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ipsos Mori Survey 2020 - <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/42183/pdf/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://softpower30.com/>

educational system' and 'respects law and human rights' and ascends to the top in 'easy to communicate with' and 'trustworthy media' attributes, proving an edge in specific perceptions around its universities, constitution, and journalism. For more than a decade, the UK's strengths have been successfully promoted by the GREAT Britain and Northern Ireland Campaign – one of the world's longest running and most impactful nation branding and marketing initiatives'<sup>7</sup>.

16. VLV notes the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence Report in 2014, *Persuasion and Power in the Modern World*<sup>8</sup>, in which it said that soft power can be defined as 'the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment'<sup>9</sup>. It is dependent on a deep understanding of how others see the UK.
17. The report highlighted that in recent decades immense changes have taken place internationally, which have led to a shift in the international balance of power and influence. In this new world, access to information via digital platforms and transnational challenges enable people to be increasingly interconnected across national borders: 'The degree to which populations now form networks across borders gives this soft power a newly increased impact because it relies to a significant degree on popular perceptions'<sup>10</sup>.
18. VLV agrees with the Committee's view that it is vital the UK evolves in order to maintain the UK in positions of influence and protect its interests internationally – 'these power streams of change are converging... The UK ... must change fundamentally the way it interacts with other nations and communities'<sup>11</sup>.
19. The Committee highlighted that international power can be generated by influencing other people and countries to want the same things as the UK by building and maintaining a positive international reputation and by building relationships and coalitions. These are necessary if we are to defend our interests and security and to be effective on the global stage.
20. The Committee expressed a concern about making the World Service budget dependent on licence fee funding. It recommended that the Government should consider a range of funding options for the World service to ensure its reach and influence are maintained in a competitive global media market, including access to funding from central taxation.
21. VLV also agrees with Baroness Helic's view expressed in an article in *The House* in October 2023 that 'More than at any point since the cold war, we are in a battle of ideas, with competing narratives and visions of the future. If the Government wants to win that battle, we need to be sure that accurate and impartial information is freely available. The World Service is the best way of doing that. We should make sure it has the funding – and independence – it needs to flourish.'<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-soft-power-index-2024-digital.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/150.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Nye J. S. Jr. (2008) 'Public Diplomacy and Soft Power', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 no. 1 pp94-109.

<sup>10</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/150.pdf>, page 9

<sup>11</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/150.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/bbc-world-service-vital-increasingly-dangerous-world>

22. We set out below some of the soft power advantages VLV considers the World Service contributes to:

- a) **International Influence:** because the World Service is widely accessible (it is available internationally in 43 languages, with correspondents in 75 news bureaux around the world<sup>13</sup>) it is one of the most influential global news services. The BBC estimates that it has an audience of over 411m people on average each week<sup>14</sup>. Through the reach of its in-depth analysis and reporting, the World Service is able to shape international public opinion on global issues.
- b) **Trust and Credibility:** The values characterised in accurate, impartial information are an enhancing power. The BBC is widely regarded as one of the most reliable and impartial sources of news in the world. The World Service is the most trusted news service in the world according to a BBC Review of the World Service in 2021<sup>15</sup>. This trust enhances the UK's reputation for fair and balanced journalism, fostering goodwill and credibility on the global stage. Its impartiality sets it apart from other international broadcasters which are government funded, such as CCTV, Press TV, Russia Today, Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya. The BBC's independence from government is seen as beneficial, because unlike other countries such as China in which broadcasters do not criticise their governments<sup>16</sup> the BBC is considered to be a credible news source.
- c) **Freedom of Speech:** According to the RSF Press Freedom Index 2024 the overall picture for press freedom globally was one of deterioration, with the percentage of countries classed as overall "good" or "satisfactory" declining from 29% in 2023 to 25% in 2024<sup>17</sup>. By providing a platform for free and open discussion, the BBC World Service promotes the value of freedom of speech, a core British principle.
- d) **Democratic Principles:** Through its programming, the World Service often highlights the importance and benefits of democratic processes, the rule of law, and human rights, aligning with and promoting British democratic values.
- e) **Crisis Reporting and Humanitarian Information:** During crises, the BBC World Service is often a vital source of accurate and timely information for citizens in an affected region. This role reinforces the perception of the UK as a responsible and dependable global actor. By providing vital information during humanitarian crises, the BBC World Service supports global humanitarian efforts, aligning with the UK's commitment to international aid and development.
- f) **Countering Disinformation:** As the world's populations are increasingly polarised, especially due to online disinformation, the World Service provides trustworthy, accurate news. By providing accurate news, the BBC World Service helps support a more informed and balanced global discourse. We note the Government provided additional emergency funding to the World Service for its services in Ukraine and Russia in response to the war in Ukraine, specifically to counter disinformation after the 'refreshed Integrated Review conclude[d] that democracies like the UK must go further to out-co-operate and out-compete states that are driving instability. Developments over the past

<sup>13</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/42183/pdf/>

<sup>14</sup> BBC Annual Plan 2024-5

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2021/bbc-world-service-five-year-review>

<sup>16</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/150.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://pressgazette.co.uk/media-audience-and-business-data/rsf-press-freedom-index-2024/>

year, particularly the conflict in Ukraine, have shown the importance of being able to counter the hostile use of disinformation and to tackle the spread of harmful state narratives<sup>18</sup>.

- g) **Promotion of English language:** The use of English language in the English language services promotes the language globally, enhancing its status as one of the most important languages, thereby indirectly promoting British culture and influence.
- h) **Diaspora Connections:** the World Service acts as a link to the UK for the British diaspora and for people in former British colonies, maintaining and strengthening historical and cultural ties.

### **Question 3: What trends are there in the funding and support for internationally focussed broadcasters in countries such as China, the US, France and Russia?**

- 23. Support for international broadcasters funded by countries like China, the US, France, and Russia have seen significant growth in recent years. Declines in press freedom and gaps in media regulations have reduced democratic resilience and created greater opportunities in recent years. They all appear to be increasing investment, strategic narrative promotion, and digital adaptation, tailored to their respective geopolitical goals and cultural strategies. These broadcasters play a crucial role in shaping global public opinion and projecting their countries' soft power.
- 24. VLV notes again the article by Baroness Helic in *The House* in October 2023<sup>19</sup> in which she said, 'Countries such as Russia, China and Iran invest heavily in news and media services to spread their versions of events – while also trying to shut down independent reporting by the BBC World Service and others. Russia has actively used disinformation to create pretexts for its invasion of Ukraine. Its state-owned news outlet Sputnik is hugely influential in key regions – not just Russia. China is thought to spend hundreds of millions – perhaps billions – of pounds on external media every year. The official news agency, Xinhua, has 37 bureaux in Africa, more than any other media agency. Our adversaries' propaganda seeks to turn readers and listeners against the open international order and the principles of freedom and international law. They paint the West as weak and failing on the one hand, and oppressive and manipulative on the other'.
- 25. **China:** China has heavily invested in its international broadcasting capabilities, particularly through state-owned media like China Global Television Network (CGTN) and Xinhua News Agency in recent years. VLV notes that Beijing's media influence was designated as high or very high in more than 50% of the countries examined in a study by the American organisation Freedom House in 2022<sup>20</sup>. This is part of China's broader strategy to expand its soft power. Additionally, as part of its funding of infrastructure development, significant resources have been allocated to enhance broadcasting infrastructure in developing countries, this includes 5G wireless networking, which China has been aggressive in trying to have Huawei and to a lesser extent ZTE build in a lot of developing countries<sup>21</sup>. Chinese international broadcasters focus on promoting China's

<sup>18</sup> Press Release, 13 March 2023, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/bbc-world-service-vital-increasingly-dangerous-world>

<sup>20</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/report/beijing-global-media-influence/2022/authoritarian-expansion-power-democratic-resilience>

<sup>21</sup> <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/beijings-global-media-offensive-9780197515761?cc=gb&lang=en&>

perspectives and countering negative perceptions. They aim to provide a positive image of China and present its stance on global issues. There is a strong emphasis on cultural and educational content to enhance cultural diplomacy. Chinese broadcasters are increasingly leveraging digital platforms and social media to reach global audiences, especially younger demographics.

26. **United States:** Funding for American international broadcasters such as The Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) has seen fluctuations in recent years, dependent on the political climate and administration priorities. Recent trends are a shift towards countering disinformation and propaganda, particularly from rival states. American-funded media channels tend to promote democratic values, freedom of the press and human rights, often targeting regions where these values are under threat. There is a growing emphasis on using new technologies and platforms to enhance reach and engagement, including social media, podcasts, and mobile apps.
27. **France:** France provides financial support for its international broadcasters, such as France 24 and Radio France Internationale (RFI), recognising their role in promoting French culture and perspectives globally. French international broadcasters largely operate under a public service model with stable government funding. A significant portion of the content is aimed at the Francophone world, promoting French language and culture. Broadcasters focus on providing comprehensive news coverage with a French perspective, including extensive reporting on Africa and other regions with historical ties to France.
28. **Russia:** Russian international broadcasters such as RT (formerly Russia Today) and Sputnik receive substantial state funding to promote Russia's viewpoint and counter Western narratives<sup>22</sup>. Despite a Western ban of these state-funded outlets since the invasion of Ukraine, they continue to have impact through social media channels and television channels in countries where they are not banned, including in Africa and Latin America. These outlets are often used to disseminate disinformation and propaganda, influencing public opinion in target countries. Russian broadcasters produce content in multiple languages to maximize their reach and impact globally. There is a strategic focus on controversial and divisive topics to influence and disrupt the political discourse in other countries. Russian broadcasters are adept at using online platforms and social media to spread their content and engage with audiences worldwide.

#### **Question 4: What are the likely financial needs of the World Service in the coming years and the likely damage to its offering in the short-term if funds are not forthcoming?**

29. The costs of the World Service include maintaining and expanding broadcasting capabilities, including infrastructure for radio, television, and digital platforms and content production. This year (2024-5) the BBC estimates that the world service budget will be £334 million, excluding distribution costs<sup>23</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/despite-western-bans-putins-propaganda-flourishes-spanish-tv-and-social-media> and <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/kremlin-mouthpiece-heart-africa-how-afrique-media-helps-putin-court-audiences-their-own>

<sup>23</sup> BBC Annual Plan 2024-5



30. In VLV's view this budget should be maintained at least in line with inflation, however in recent years it has been cut because it is dependent on the BBC for its income.
31. According to VLV research BBC real terms income from the licence fee has dropped by 34% since 2010<sup>24</sup>. After the most recent BBC funding settlement, which imposed a two year freeze on income at a time of very high inflation, significant cuts have had to be made at the World Service. While the corporation has implemented efficiency savings consistently since 2016/17, there is little more which can be cut without it impacting on the services for audiences. In September 2022 the BBC argued that the BBC's international services, along with all its other services, would need to make additional annual savings; the World Service annual saving was set at £28.5m annually.
32. As part of its cost saving drive and the move towards digital, the BBC has moved nearly half the World Service's language services to digital only. Interestingly, the risk that Russia might target Ukraine's internet infrastructure led to the BBC reactivating short-wave radio news services in the region.
33. Allocating funds for emergency situations, such as natural disasters or conflicts, which require rapid deployment of resources, are less easy to estimate than content production costs for existing services but should be anticipated.
34. Overall, it is VLV's view that the World Service is likely to require increased funding in coming years to address its needs, especially given the rapid changes in media consumption and technology. Sustainable financial support, whether from public funding, grants, partnerships, or commercial activities, will be crucial to meeting these demands. If its budget is not maintained, the World Service will be forced to implement further cuts to staffing and services. This could lead to a decline in the volume of original content, with more repeats used to fill air time. If funding is not increased at least in line with inflation, the BBC will have to further cut the number of World Service staff, leading to a potential reduction in the quality and even the accuracy of content. It is possible that the BBC will be forced to close some language services.

## **Question 5: What are the merits and concerns surrounding the possible funding models for the BBC World Service?**

35. There are a number of funding models for the BBC World Service. Historically the service was funded by parliamentary grant-in-aid, administered by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The October 2010 spending review changed this arrangement, so that from April 2014 responsibility for funding the World Service transferred to the BBC. This meant that in principle FCDO would cease paying regular grants; however it has continued to do so to a certain degree.
36. At the time of this change in policy the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee expressed concerns, arguing that 'this would have long-term ramifications for the future of the World Service'<sup>25</sup> and that the service's funding would be less secure in future, which has proven to be the case.

---

<sup>24</sup> <https://vlv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/VLV-BBC-Public-Funding-Analysis-2010-2023-all-years.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmfaaff/1058/1058.pdf>

37. Since then the Government has announced on a number of occasions that it would supply additional funding to supplement the World Service's licence fee income in response to global events. Most recently in November 2022 the Government confirmed it would continue providing the World Service with £283m a year over the three year spending review period – equating to £94.4m annually<sup>26</sup> and in 2023 an additional £20m for two years was awarded to support the World Service as part of the Integrated Review. It's estimated that approximately 75% of World Service funding comes from licence fee income<sup>27</sup>.
38. In December 2022 the BBC confirmed it planned to cut 400 roles in the World Service and move more programming online as it aimed to make savings of £28.5m. A month later the then Chairman of the BBC, Richard Sharp, urged the Government to consider taking back responsibility for funding the World Service which he said was 'in jeopardy' due to the decline in BBC income but needed more than ever because of the rise in disinformation<sup>28</sup>.
39. In March this year BBC Director General, Tim Davie, made it clear in a speech that 'we cannot keep asking UK Licence Fee payers to invest in (the World Service) when we face cuts to UK services. We will need to discuss a long-term funding solution for the World Service that comes from central government budgets'<sup>29</sup>.
40. A key issue which VLV considers should inform the funding model for the World Service is to ask who it benefits. Clearly it is aimed at audiences outside the UK and therefore VLV questions whether it is right that British citizens who pay the TV Licence should fund it. While it is clear that World Service journalists now contribute expertise which benefits BBC domestic news output, following the combining of the BBC domestic and international news teams, the primary goal of the World Service is to provide content for international audiences.
41. Below is an analysis of the various potential funding models for the World Service. It is clear from this analysis that each funding model for the World Service has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Since there is no ideal option, the VLV recommends that the World Service is funded directly by central Government, separately from the BBC's UK services, as it has done for decades before it changed the funding model in 2014. While this is not an ideal solution, in our view it is the best solution. There is a precedent that even though the World Service was funded directly by Government in the past, it had editorial independence from Government. We would wish this precedent to be maintained.

#### 42. Funding from Central Government

Government funding can provide a potentially stable and predictable source of income, which is essential for long-term planning and investment in quality content, however such funding can be vulnerable to shifts in government priorities, potentially leading to budget cuts. Another disadvantage is that this model leads to a perceived risk of political influence or interference, especially if the government chooses to threaten budget cuts<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-09/83669>

<sup>27</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/42183/pdf/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/speeches/2023/richard-sharp-wig-breakfast-briefing>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/speeches/2024/a-bbc-for-the-future-tim-davie-director-general>

<sup>30</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/150.pdf>, Para 46

#### **43. Funding through Licence Fee (hypothecated tax)**

While funding via the licence fee provides greater perceived editorial independence from government, which increases credibility, unless this funding is provided ***in addition*** to TV Licence income it undermines the BBC's ability to maintain services for UK audiences.

#### **44. Commercial Revenue**

Revenue generated through advertising, sponsorship, and partnerships would diversify the World Service's income streams and reduce dependence on a single funding source, however there is a risk that commercial interests could lead to the prioritisation of more popular, commercially attractive content, thus undermining the public service motivation of the World Service. The inclusion of adverts on the World Service could alienate audiences who prefer ad-free content.

#### **45. Philanthropic Funding**

Philanthropic funding could be a potential source of income for specific projects, such as investigative journalism, educational content, or reporting in underrepresented regions, however, philanthropic funding can be unpredictable and makes long-term planning challenging. There is also a risk of undue donor influence over editorial content, especially if donors have specific agendas or priorities and it can be resource intensive because fundraising activity uses up valuable resources which could otherwise be directed to content provision.

#### **46. Hybrid Model**

A hybrid funding model might provide a more balanced and resilient financial base. All the merits and drawbacks for each individual funding model would apply.