



IDEAS PODCAST/PROGRAMME

Commissioning Brief Number	47222
Commissioner	Matthew Dodd, Commissioning Editor, Arts
For enquiries please contact	Lea Lauvray, Business Coordinator, lea.lauvray@bbc.co.uk
Guide price	£7k per ep (including presenter fees)
Anticipated duration/ number of episodes	50 eps at 28'
Anticipated transmission period	April 2027-March 2028
Production location	Proposals which support the BBC's strategic rebalancing of production away from London, either from the outset or with a credible transition plan in the first year of the contract, are encouraged.
Deadline	Short proposals and completed production eligibility questionnaires must be submitted via PiCoS by midday on Tues 10 Nov 12 noon

Creative opportunity

Radio 4 and BBC Sounds are seeking proposals for a new always-on podcast about ideas. It's an opportunity to create something new and distinctive in a field that fizzles with activity – but can be overwhelming. We want to help audiences find the connections between the turbulent world they find themselves in and the ideas that lie behind it. We want to unravel the web of intellectual influences that are shaping our decisions – even if we're not aware of them. This podcast should help audiences understand the frameworks below the surface, explore the big questions, and decipher the major theories that lie behind them.

Some of these ideas have only emerged in the last decade. Others have been with us since the dawn of human thinking. They might cover philosophy, science, psychology, self-help, sociology, theology, culture – and beyond.

Because these challenges are all around us, we're aiming for an ideas podcast that is life-enhancing and illuminating. We want audiences to feel practical benefits from listening. We want them to take away not just the in-depth exploration they expect from Radio 4, but also an indication of where answers might lie and how it can make a real difference to their ability to navigate their world.

We're looking for a presenter and a format that can build on-demand audiences on BBC Sounds, can sit in a high-profile slot on Radio 4, and will be available wherever audiences get their podcasts. It will be weekly with a duration of 28 minutes.

What we'd like to see in your proposal:

At the heart of this podcast, we're looking for a presenter who will drive its identity. They should be a charismatic and innately curious thinker around whom you can build this format. Someone who brings big ideas to life with ease, is intellectually un-hierarchical, has an open manner, engages with all-comers, and has a warm style with humour and joy when needed.

They might be an insider figure – known to specialists in this field who can develop new dimensions for a wider audience. Or it might be a brand-new talent you feel has the potential to use this podcast to become high profile and champion big ideas. They should be able to be provocative and popular in their approach, when that is needed, to draw in wide audiences to cerebral questions. The presenter's tone should suggest passion and urgency, whatever the topic.

The podcast they host should have a central distinctive concept that enables talk about ideas in the broadest possible way – personal and global, popular and high-concept, celebratory and serious, topical and timeless. We need the presenter to be able to talk about anything.

We're keen to hear your thoughts about how the theme of each edition should be decided – guest-based, issue-based or something else? How would you title and frame each edition – given that titles are vital in drawing in digital audiences?

How could this podcast offer the heft and rigour Radio 4 audiences expect and not feel purely didactic and neutral? And we're keen to know how it could live beyond the Radio 4 schedule, enriching and explaining the world to a weekly audience who follow existing ideas podcasts which are fronted by a broad range of personalities. Where would our new offer fit in? And how could it build a community of non-BBC weekly podcast listeners?

It's important that this podcast marks out distinct territory from Radio 4's existing ideas portfolio like Radical, Start the Week, In Our Time, Moral Maze, Political Thinking – and our focused coverage of [AI/Tech](#). We'll also continue to commission series like How Reading Made Us, Everything Is Fake (and Nobody Cares), Things Fell Apart, Human Intelligence.

Social media and visualisation are likely to be part of the offer; we will develop these alongside the successful production company.

Distribution

The granting of RSS rights is a condition of commission.

Key deliverables

This pitch is for audio, however there is potential for visualisation in the future.

Important Information:

- In order to pitch your company must be an approved supplier and be registered on PiCoS. You can find more information on how to do this on the [BBC Radio Commissioning website](#)
- This title will be commissioned under the **Audio Terms of Trade**, unless otherwise specified
- **Music Policy** [Using Music in BBC audio programmes](#)
- Your proposal should consider how the editorial and production methods contribute towards the BBC's [Sustainability strategy](#) and the BBC's [Diversity & Inclusion strategy](#).
- The [BBC Editorial Guidelines](#) set the editorial values and standards of the organisation. The guidelines apply to all BBC content wherever in the world it is broadcast or published.
- The BBC has issued [Information and Guiding Principles](#) to ensure the responsible use of Generative AI technology in BBC programmes. Note that if you intend to use Generative AI in the production and delivery of your programme, this will need to be discussed with the commissioner, who will consult Editorial Policy as appropriate.
- The BBC reserves the right, at any time prior to the award of a commission and without incurring any liability to affected producers to accept or reject any proposal or to cancel the commissioning process.

- **Partnerships:** if you plan to submit as part of a partnership, please include the following detail in the Production Eligibility section on PiCoS:
 - Responsibilities each partner will take
 - Personnel who will be responsible for the production and delivery of the programme
 - Lead company with whom the BBC will contract

TIMELINE

Tues 10 Nov 12 noon	Submit Production Experience (up to 1000 words) and Short Proposal (a brief outline of your idea - up to 500 words - showing how it meets the editorial brief) All submissions will be reviewed and the strongest proposals shortlisted. Producers will be notified whether or not they have been shortlisted. No feedback is provided at this stage.
Wc 16 Nov	Shortlisted producers are invited to pitch. They may be asked to prepare additional material.
04-17 Dec	Pitch meetings with the commissioning editor
Tues 12 Jan 12 noon	Producers submit a Full Proposal (up to 1200 words). You may also be requested to provide further information (e.g. a sample running order; a proposed budget)
Late January	Results

Production Eligibility

In the Production Experience section of the create proposal page in PiCoS, please outline your relevant production experience, using recent examples, in the following areas (maximum 1,000 words):

Relevant experience and staffing depth in making factual podcasts that deal with wide-ranging and challenging editorial subjects with rigour and imagination. We expect the Producers and Execs who would work on the project to be named.

Relevant experience of producing successful factual podcasts – and ideally, experience of making always-on or weekly strands. Producers and Execs who have not worked with Radio 4/BBC Sounds before should list their relevant experience in detail.

An understanding of the audience that we are aiming to appeal to with this show.