

WWF-UK

Sent by email

I am writing on behalf of WWF UK to respond to the consultation on the new BBC Editorial Guidelines.

We welcome the strengthening of the section on impartiality with new principles, particularly 2.2.7 which states that "false equivalence does not achieve impartiality" and says that views that are less supported by evidence - such as climate denial - do not need to be given similar prominence to those that are better evidenced.

However, we are concerned that later in the document under a section on 'contested issues' on page 187, "the extent of climate change" is given as an example of a contested issue. Of course the advice of specialist journalists is welcome in this area, but we would like to make very clear that the extent of climate change is observable and measurable by science and as such should not be viewed as contested in a serious sense - and viewing it as such risks the false equivalence warned against above. We ask that another more suitable example is used in this section.

We also note that there are no mentions of 'environment' or 'nature' in the new guidelines (in the sense of the natural world and environment). We would like the BBC to consider including a specific section on the climate and nature crises to guide reporting on these issues (similar to the section on Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour or Politics and Public Policy). As major themes in news and other programming that are highly complex and easily misunderstood or misrepresented, and are often reported on by non-expert journalists or presenters (for example political journalists travelling with the prime minister to a climate conference), we feel that guidance on how to cover these topics would be welcome. We would be happy to lend the expertise within our organisation to work with the BBC on developing the contents of such a section.