

BBC Bitesize Geography Visualised Podcast

Commissioning Brief Number:	109139-1
Commissioner:	Giacomo Shimmings
For enquiries please contact:	Commissioning Executive giacomo.shimmings@bbc.co.uk
Guide price:	30k total (approx. £3,000 per episode) Does include presenter fees.
Anticipated duration/number of episodes/slot:	1 Series, 10 episodes per series 10-14 minutes in length
Anticipated transmission period:	February 2027
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 Tue 7th July 2026

Creative opportunity

We would like to commission short form, curriculum-linked visualised podcast content for 14–16-year-old learners (KS4 in England), which will be discoverable on BBC Bitesize's website and BBC Sounds.

On bbc.co.uk/bitesize we envisage that each individual episode will be embedded in the relevant page of curriculum content, so that learners will find this rich audio/visual content at their point of need and then go on to explore and subscribe to the whole audio series on BBC Sounds.

We are looking for content which plays to the strengths of the audio medium, so audiences listening to audio only will have a complete experience of rich audio with key learning delivered accessibly with an emphasis on clarity and engagement.

Our research tells us that young audiences may also want to consume this content visually and so we want to build on our established educational podcast offer to deliver an engaging visual experience too. The visualised podcasts will complement rather than be an alternative to our existing content formats, which include text, video, infographics, interactives, quizzes, and simulation games.

Target audience:

GCSE students aged 14-16 preparing for their Geography exam in England. Students may also be using the series at any time during years 10 and 11 whilst studying the subject and revising for class tests.

We have put together a pack of audience insights, subject-specific insights and consumption of the subject on BBC Bitesize.

The pack can be found here:

https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/radio/commissioning/BBC_Bitesize_Audiences_Pack_2026_Geography.pdf

Subject brief: GCSE Geography

We are looking for a Bitesize Geography format that will help students understand and revise topics from across the geography curriculum to prepare them for their exams.

It is expected to break down as:

- One series of ten episodes
 - each episode approximately 10-14 minutes long
(see below for titles)

Our research informs us there is a strong demand for student-focussed, discussion-based formats which model and encourage evaluation and decision-making skills. Teachers talk of preparing their students to ‘think like a geographer’ by giving them skills to analyse and interpret data and come to balanced and justifiable conclusions.

Informed by this, each episode will open with a question on a major GCSE geography topic such as natural hazards, climate change or coastal management. The episode should set the scene by explaining key learning associated with the topic and evolve into a focussed discussion weighing up arguments informed by evidence. Episodes should take learning further and model key evaluation and analysis skills by presenting a range of supported judgements on the topic and encouraging students to activate their own analysis skills.

Episodes should include key facts and relevant case studies, as appropriate, ensuring data is attributed and time stamped. A quiz element can be incorporated if appropriate and/or questions to stimulate reflection and further enquiry. We are open to modification of these ideas or fresh approaches.

GCSE Geography requires students to think about global issues which may be relevant and real for our audience. Issues such as climate change, migration and flooding are topics discussed in this commission and we want to be mindful of students’ experiences and potential anxiety. In addition, we must ensure editorial accuracy and responsible portrayal of topics included in our content.

Hosts

We are looking to use two hosts per episode and want relatable hosts who are charismatic, natural on camera and who have good onscreen chemistry together. To help us build reach for our content we are interested in those with an established audience on target platforms as well as expertise and credibility within the subject.

We want the dialogue between the hosts to feel natural, enthusiastic and engaging. Please tell us the tools and techniques you will use to build rapport between hosts.

Dialogue must adhere to English GCSE Geography curriculum, using language and explanation at an appropriate level for our audience. Please consider how you would deliver this and outline your approach to scripting and in-studio considerations to ensure curriculum-relevance.

For this commission we are looking for hosts who can deliver content in a conversational style, perhaps with a lighter script to encourage genuine and naturally flowing conversation and therefore engagement. We are also expecting hosts who can talk fluently and authoritatively on the subject within the confines of the GCSE syllabus and who are confident modelling informed judgements without drawing definitive conclusions. Hosts should be neutral with no affiliations that could compromise their impartiality or perspective on the content, and your due diligence will be required regarding this.

Please provide the names of hosts who you think fit the series, and outline if you have a relationship with them. Please give us the perfect fit, instead of a list of potentials.

You may approach, if you do not have a relationship, but they need to be within reach by the Long Submission stage.

Consider the following:

- Can they deliver using lightly scripted notes?
- Who will really connect with our target audience?
- Will they work on-screen as well as in audio?
- Are they exciting new and emerging voices?
- Are they established artists, celebs, or inspirational figures?
- Are they great communicators with a genuine expertise in the subject and perhaps a following for that on the internet?
- Are they relatable to the audience who can be seen to “learn with” the audience?

Style and tone are important. Presentation should not be dry or formal. Consider carefully how you entertain or engage the audience as they learn. You need to keep them watching/listening for the full 10-14 minutes.

Think about how you might captivate and make the topic accessible. How you might use the structure of the format, to facilitate remembering the information.

The visual aspect of this podcast is important as is any b-roll footage or images used to illustrate the content. However, consider this production audio-first, so that the audio can stand alone in Sounds as well as work as video.

Scripting

On previous commissions, the BBC and its teacher consultants have reviewed draft scripts ahead of recording sessions to ensure educational accuracy. For this commission we want to explore a process that will deliver fluent and natural discussion, and possibly debate, for a satisfying audience experience while also meeting our educational curriculum requirements. It is important for you to consider how this ambition will be delivered and communicated in your proposal.

The educational aspect of the content will need scrutiny; please outline from direction, script, record and delivery how this scrutiny will be applied.

Series structure

#	Episode title	Learning objectives (subject to change)
1	Can we ever really protect ourselves from natural hazards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare types of hazard and hazard management strategies.• Assess why impacts of hazards vary between places.• Make justified judgements about preparedness.
2	Should we fight the sea?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare hard and soft engineering coastal management strategies.• Evaluate the winners and losers associated with coastal management.• Justify management decisions.
3	Can the problem of flooding ever be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the causes of flooding.• Assess the strategies used to manage flooding.• Analyse future scenarios with regards to flooding (e.g. climate change and population increase).
4	Can ecosystems be protected without limiting development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the pressures placed on ecosystems by human activity.• Compare different conservation and management approaches.• Evaluate whether environmental protection and economic development can exist side by side.
5	Is climate adaptation more realistic than mitigation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the difference between adaptation and mitigation.• Evaluate the relative effectiveness of adaptation and mitigation.• Develop a balanced judgement.
6	Does migration create more challenges or opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse the main drivers (push and pull factors) of migration.• Assess the impacts on source and host countries.• Evaluate competing viewpoints about migration.
7	Can cities grow sustainably?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the challenges of urban growth.• Evaluate regeneration and planning strategies.• Judge sustainability claims.
8	Does globalisation create more winners than losers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the processes of globalisation and the role of TNCs.• Compare the impacts on people and places.• Make supported judgements.
9	Should tourism always be encouraged?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism.• Assess benefits for stakeholders.• Evaluate sustainability as a development strategy.
10	What makes a convincing geographical argument?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinguish between types of geographical evidence.• Assess strengths and limitations of evidence.• Evaluate how evidence supports conclusions.

Graphics and on-screen assets

If you include any b-roll on-screen graphics or images, they should complement the content. The finished content should be audio first, and the scripting around the presentation of the visuals should not exclude the audio-only audience.

Any images should be globally rights cleared by you. Data or visualised graphics should be attributed and date-stamped to help students source the content and maintain public trust in accurate data.

Extra studio time and pick ups

Due to the partially unscripted nature of the content, we may need pickups and/or alternative records. In your proposal, please include mitigations for pickups and re-recordings – if necessary.

Educational excellence

An important note on educational excellence and working with teacher consultants: Educational accuracy is at the heart of the Bitesize brand: it's imperative that students and teachers trust that our content is curriculum linked and that it's correct in every detail. Our tone of voice is authoritative but never patronising – we aim to make the subject accessible and we are friendly without being the student's 'best mate'.

We ensure the accuracy and curriculum focus of Bitesize content by working with educational (teacher) consultants who are expert in each subject.

In this commission we would expect you to engage a teacher consultant to work with you on the content of the series throughout the production process. This should be included in your proposed budget.

Before you submit your proposal, it would be advisable to seek the advice of a teacher consultant/s. We would like you to think about and indicate how the educational fidelity of your treatment could be maintained in the production phase e.g. content/script reviews and recordings.

Should you be successful in winning this commission, we will work with you to develop the format. Working with our own teacher consultants, we will finalise outlines of learning outcomes, which will be agreed with and signed off by the BBC, before you go into production.

Your proposal

Please note that we will not commission a different series for each English exam board, instead agreeing learning outcomes that will support students sitting each board in England.

The Bitesize guides found at the following link may be useful:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zy3ptyc>

In your proposal we'd like you to focus on the format. How will you bring these topics alive for learners? How will you make the learning experience fun, interesting and engaging? How will your format help learners understand and retain information?

Previous GCSE Bitesize revision podcasts are on Bitesize pages or easily searchable within BBC Sounds.

Overall, please consider including the following at the relevant stages of your proposal:

- An outline of the idea, including formatting, execution, and tone.

- What is your idea of how the episode will sound and look? We are looking for creativity in both audio and visual aspects.
- Who would you want for hosts? What connection to they have to the subject matter? Can they speak to the topics in the series as a whole?
- Who is your proposed producer/exec and what is their relevant experience/skill set?
- Who is your proposed teacher consultant and what is their relevant expertise? How will you engage them throughout the production?
- How would you work with your proposed teacher consultant to ensure the educational fidelity of your treatment is maintained?
- BBC standards and values – you'll need to demonstrate an understanding of our expectations at the BBC - including a thorough understanding of the BBC's editorial guidelines, health and safety procedures and the BBC's diversity and inclusion strategy.
- In addition to the audio/visualised commission, we would welcome ideas to promote the audio content across the internet.
- What features or elements of your visualised podcast idea would work as social promotion? What might this content be? And how would this increase reach and drive the target demographic back to Bitesize and Sounds?
- Please look at the assessment criteria, the highest values are for your effort.
- There is the option that Bitesize will direct commission additional social assets from the winning supplier, after this commissioning round has closed.

It's important to note that we won't be commissioning the podcast on the strength of any promotional ideas.

Short Proposal

- Your Short Proposal should be no more than **500 words** and **summarise** your specific ideas. It should demonstrate your ability to produce the programme and answer the editorial objectives and other requirements as set out in the Editorial Opportunity.
- A brief general treatment for the series, with consideration to episodic format structure (changes and similarities).
- A brief treatment for one episode of the Series. Please use the Migration episode.
- Please provide an approximate production cost and broad stroke timeline, for full delivery of audio/video in mid-January 2027.

Long Proposal

- A detailed treatment for the series, with consideration to episodic format structure (changes and similarities). How will it be consistent and vary episode by episode (for variety).
- An enhanced treatment for one episode of the Series. Please provide structure, format and any scripting/script notes necessary for us to understand how it will sound and how the topic would be delivered. Please use the Migration episode.
- You can flesh out the Short Proposal into a Long Proposal. We may have questions or ask you to cover additional ground in the submission to understand your proposal better.

- If possible, we would like a simple chemistry test audio recording (low quality /telephone /online call) or a recording of your host choices voices to help us understand how they sound and will work together.
- You may contact potential hosts and discover their availability.
- Budget breakdown and approximate timeline for production, assuming media delivery mid-January 2027 and metadata at the end of January 2027.

Interview/Pitch

You may be invited to an interview/pitch meeting with the evaluation team. We will notify you which members of the evaluation team will be attending this meeting, and you should expect to be asked to discuss and elaborate on your proposal and answer questions about it. It is also possible we may ask you to bring additional relevant material to this meeting – for example, further learning features within the podcast.

Distribution

- BBC Sounds
- BBC Bitesize
- Third party content platforms

RSS is not planned for this commission.

Key deliverables

Audio

1. Delivered by Dropbox as a .wav - 16 bit 48k dual mono/stereo files.
2. Agreed number of episodes (without the BBC Sounds sting).
3. Liners for audio trails, as requested.
4. Adhering to BBC technical specs for audio delivery.

Video

1. Delivered by Dropbox in a suitable uncompressed 1080p (minimum) video format (to be agreed with the BBC).
2. Agreed number of episodes.
3. Behind the scenes photographs at high resolution, for use as thumbnails.
4. Matches the mastered audio for Sounds.
5. Additional images of the set and scene at the beginning of the video, and images of key video moments.
6. B-roll log which includes timecode, source and confirmation of rights.
7. BBC Chameleon branding on the finished video.
8. If requested by Social Teams, clips of raw footage for use as global social posts, with your approval.

Promotional material

1. Series photos: at least five photos that can represent the series as a whole.
2. A clean (plain background) upper torso photograph of the presenter/s. Please ensure that the pictures can be cropped as a square (1080x1080 dimensions).
3. Press & Marketing: Coordination with hosts/production teams to provide interviews and/or take part in press articles and other podcast promotion. Personal internet posts, where possible.

Paperwork and other supporting material

1. Compliance for all media supplied – confirming delivered material is compliant with BBC Editorial Guidelines.
2. Episode titles and episode synopsis/descriptions (ie Billings/show notes) which follow the BBC Sounds podcast guidelines. These will be entered into a BBC system.
3. Music Reporting, which follows Commissioning guidelines into a BBC system

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](#)
- The BBC Bitesize brand is the BBC's IP and this title will be commissioned on a work-for-hire basis. The producer will be expected to assign all rights in the programme to the BBC. All contributions, audio, images and video must be cleared for global availability.
- **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	
Tue 7th Jul 2026 (midday)	Submit production experience and short proposal (a brief outline of your idea - up to 500 words - showing how it meets the editorial brief). <i>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.</i>
Thu 13th Aug 2026 (midday)	Producers may be invited to submit a full proposal (up to 5,000 words). You may also be requested to provide further information.
Wed 2nd Sept 2026 Thur 3rd Sept 2026	Producers may be invited to a pitch on these days. Focus areas for questions will be sent with the invite. Proposals are then reassessed and a preferred producer is selected. <i>Feedback will be available on request to unsuccessful applicants who reached the pitching stage. Requests must be made within two weeks of receiving the outcome.</i>
Mon 14th Sept	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 for audio and visualised podcasts.
Relevant experience of producing educational content and strategies to evolve consumer engagement.
An understanding of the importance of educational consultants, how editorial ideas deliver learning outcomes.

Assessment Criteria	
The BBC will assess the [pitch/full proposal] according to the criteria below.	
Editorial	80%
BBC's strategic priorities including Across the UK and Diversity & Inclusion	5%
Value for money	10%
Risk	5%
More details on how the BBC will make its assessment will be given to shortlisted producers.	