

BBC expands programme dominance in Africa

BBC Worldwide has announced at their annual BBC Worldwide Showcase event, that it has sold over 800 hours of world class British television programming to several leading broadcasters and platforms throughout sub-Saharan Africa.



Image by 123RF

Across digital, pay TV and free-to-air platforms, British drama has been the driver, with global hits including *Luther*, *Ripper Street* and *Call the Midwife* being most in demand.

In the past four months, BBC Worldwide has secured some of its biggest television sales deals in the territory, with SVOD platform ShowMax purchasing in excess of 250 hours of programming. Across drama, comedy, natural history and children's programmes, audiences in sub-Saharan Africa can now look forward to enjoying classics like *Absolutely Fabulous* and the hugely successful *War and Peace*. This is the second deal with the SVOD service since it launched in August 2015.

Significant sales deals have also been secured with both pay TV and free-to-air broadcasters. StarTimes, the pay TV operator has bought over 200 hours of drama and comedy programmes, including global hit series *Luther*, *Doctor Who* and *Call the Midwife*.

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Standard Media's free-to-air channel KTN licensed three British drama series, *Atlantis* series 1 and 2 as well as *Sinbad*. Additionally, Mediamax Network, also in Kenya, has just licensed the iconic *Big Cat Diaries* catalogue for its Kameme TV channel, which will be dubbed into the Kikuyu language, spoken by the largest ethnic group in the country.

Joel Churcher, vice president and general manager for Africa, BBC Worldwide said, “It's an incredibly exciting time for the television industry in Africa. There's an insatiable appetite for top-tier programmes and BBC Worldwide content, in particular our drama series, are cutting through the wealth of content available and being recognised as some of the most popular shows across the continent. Showcase will be pivotal for us as a business to capitalise on the influx of popularity for our content and formats and deliver it to an even bigger audience in 2017.

“We’re also excited to be hosting three new buyers from Africa this year. I’ll launch a new SVOD service across the continent, NET2 TV a key free to air channel in Ghana, and also new Pay TV platform, Econet Media Group. Each of them will get to see the very best of our new content for 2017 and also some of the best programmes in our back catalogue.”

Flourishing market

Africa as a continent has fast become one of BBC Worldwide’s most flourishing markets with a growing demand for quality BBC programmes. South Africa was the first country to carry and broadcast all five channel brands (BBC Brit, BBC Lifestyle, BBC First, BBC Earth and CBeebies) and since their launch in 2015 on MultiChoice’s DSTV platform, the appetite for BBC content has expanded rapidly.

Following the recent successes and interest from African broadcasters, BBC Worldwide is hoping to bring even more of its world-class premium content to viewers across the continent at its annual showcase event.

Grant Welland, executive vice president, central and eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, BBC Worldwide said, “The range and quality of great British shows in our catalogue is what makes Showcase one of the must attend events on the sales calendar. We’ll be celebrating the full spectrum of British drama, launching the follow-up to one of the BBC’s most successful natural history programmes, and introducing the latest series of the global hit *Top Gear*. With such a broad catalogue of content, it will be very exciting to see what African broadcasters will be interested in bringing back to their viewers.”

As the largest distributor of TV programming outside of the USA, BBC Worldwide Showcase sees the BBC’s commercial arm generate programme sales on behalf of the BBC and independent producers providing a major boost to British television exports.

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