

Expression of Interest

Bhutan Broadcasting Service

Terms of Reference for Reality Shows for 2022 and beyond

Background

The first reality show was broadcast on BBS in 2008. Since then, the popularity of the reality show has increased and so has the number of shows.

Today, there are six reality shows:

1. Druk Super Star
2. Druk Gi Kalapingka
3. The Voice of Bhutan
4. DrinchenPhamiSungkey
5. Druk Gi Tsepoem
6. Palden Drukpa

The shows are popular especially among rural Bhutanese. They serve to entertain the viewers, promote our culture, and provide a platform for budding Bhutanese singers and artists. Thanks to the reality shows, we have young Bhutanese singing Zhungdra and Boedra, the traditional Bhutanese songs.

New applicants

In addition to the existing six reality shows, there are six new applicants, waiting for the opportunity to host their own shows on BBS.

The applicants have been constantly asking the BBS management to give them the opportunity to host their own shows on BBS. They argue that the BBS should not give a monopoly to the same six reality show organisers year after year. They argue that, as a public service broadcaster, BBS should give fair opportunity to all Bhutanese who are interested.

Issues surrounding the Reality Shows

In the past, the reality shows selected the winners by votes through SMS. Since 2018, the reality show organisers started using mBoB, mPay and other banking apps in addition to the SMS votes to decide the winners.

Using the banking apps (mBoB, mPay), the contestants are asked to deposit money directly into the accounts of the show organisers. The amount decides who remains in the competition and who is eliminated. Ultimately, the money decides the winner. The amounts are not disclosed to the participants, BBS, or the public.

Although this payment is called a voting system, votes are bought and not cast. Some of the contestants had to resort to selling property, borrowing money and reportedly other means to stay in the contest.

This practice will be disallowed since it goes against the principle of a talent competition and also degrades the image and reputation of the show.

Format of revenue generation for the reality shows

1. The reality show organisers keep 80% of the revenue from the SMS votes.
2. The two telecoms receive 20%.
3. In addition to the revenue from the SMS votes, the reality show organisers get eight minutes of advertisement airtime every hour.
4. Each show lasts upto two and half months, over ten weeks. This translates to eight hours of advertisement airtime for the reality show organisers to sell.
5. In addition, they can look for sponsors.

BBS' role

1. The BBS provides all the professional support. It provides the studio, the airtime, the equipment and the personnel. It provides the cameras, the cameramen, the video editors and the graphics designers. It also pays for the satellite space.
2. As a fee, BBS charges Nu.1.1 million if the show is hosted at its studio and Nu.0.8 million if the show is staged in a studio outside the BBS.
3. Initially, the BBS was paid 20% of the SMS votes.
4. In 2010, that was Nu. 1.9 million from just one show, the Druk Star.
5. In 2011, there were two shows – Bhutan Star and Druk Super Star. From the former the BBS received Nu. 2.5 million and from the latter Nu. 2.8 million.
6. The amount was slashed by more than half when it was replaced with a fixed rate per episode.

The way forward

There are currently six reality shows. There are also six new applicants.

For equity and fairness, the BBS proposes to invite Expressions of Interest from interested individuals and parties/firms to organize reality shows as detailed below:

Objectives;

1. To provide opportunity to interested individuals and parties/firms in a transparent and fair manner.
2. Promote Bhutanese culture and tradition
3. Provide a platform for budding Bhutanese performing artists
4. Provide healthy and wholesome entertainment
5. Encourage originality, innovation, and creativity
6. Ensure transparency
7. Ensure that the talent show is won by the most talented.
8. Ensure that the participants/ contestants are not exploited.

General Guidelines

1. BBS will select five shows every year.
2. Each show will last nine weeks, two months on average.
3. There will be two episodes every week, one on Saturday and one on Sunday.
4. Each episode will be three hours.
5. The prizes will be declared publicly at the start of the show.
6. The vote count for every contestant will be announced live publicly whenever necessary till a final winner is announced.

Conditions for judging

1. Only SMS votes from the public will be used to decide the winner.
2. Bulk voting will not be allowed.
3. Participants will not be allowed to approach individuals physically/ personally for votes
4. Participants may solicit for votes when they are on the show.

Conditions for organisers

1. The show organiser will be given eight minutes of advertisement airtime every hour.
2. Show organisers may seek sponsors for their shows.
3. BBS will provide the necessary professional support including the studio, the airtime, the equipment and personnel.
4. BBS will charge Nu. 47,000 (fourty-seven thousand Ngultrums) per episode if the show is hosted at a BBS studio and Nu. 30, 000 (thirty thousand Ngultrums) per episode if it is held at a studio outside BBS

Requirements for applicants

1. A proposal with the following details:
 - a) the title,
 - b) number of contestants,
 - c) number of judges and their profiles
 - d) mandate of judges
 - e) genre,
 - f) format,
 - g) procedure and criteria for selecting and eliminating the contestants,
 - h) duration of the show, when it is likely to begin and end
 - i) prizes
 - j) marketing and promotion plan, sponsorship and advertising and other revenue projections
2. They will clearly explain how the popularity of the contestants would be decided, how they would be eliminated and how the winner would be decided.
3. They will also explain how they are going to ensure transparency and fair play.

Terms of Agreement

1. Once everything is decided and agreed, the show organiser and the BBS will sign a legally binding agreement.
2. Differences, if any, will be resolved amicably and mutually as far as possible. If the differences persist, BBS will have the right to ban the show organiser from hosting shows on BBS thereafter.
3. A bank guarantee amounting to 50% of the total cost of the show will be deposited with the finance division of BBS prior to the signing of the agreement.
4. The organiser will follow the BBS commercial services advertising and sponsorship guidelines.
5. They will follow strictly the broadcasting norms and policies of the BBS.
6. To ensure voting is fair and transparent, all reality show organisers must reveal the total weekly votes.
7. The weekly votes will be counted in the presence of a BBS representative and one nominated by the organizer.
8. BBS will retain the broadcast right to the show.

Evaluation

The organiser must submit the following mandatory documents to be eligible to participate in the expression of interest.

1. Valid Trade License
2. Tax Clearance Certificate
3. Copy of Commitment Letter