

BBC announces successful bidder for BBC Outside Broadcasts

Date: 07.03.2008

The BBC has announced its selection of SIS as preferred bidder for the Outside Broadcasts division of commercial subsidiary, BBC Resources Ltd ("BBC Outside Broadcasts"), subject to contract.

SIS has been selected following a rigorous evaluation process of bids from financial and industry buyers.

The BBC intends to exchange contracts and transfer the Outside Broadcasts business and staff in the near future.

BBC Outside Broadcasts is one of the UK's leading providers of outside broadcast production facilities and services to both the BBC and other customers.

It operates a large fleet of television production units plus sound, support and communications vehicles and award-winning special cameras.

The business supports events ranging from music festivals, drama productions and major state occasions, to Wimbledon, the Olympics and World Cup football.

Andy Thornton, Project Director, said: "SIS offered the BBC a good deal and best value for licence fee payers; they have shown a real desire to grow the business and have committed to a long-term relationship with the Corporation, securing the future for some of the most vital services supporting BBC output."

SIS Chief Executive David Holdgate commented: "This is an ideal acquisition for SIS; it's a perfect fit with our existing SISLink and sports coverage, and crosses all parts of our business. SISLink markets its services to a very similar customer base.

"The quality of the BBC's outside broadcasts is legendary and we are delighted that SIS will be working closely with the talented staff that deliver these services, and will have its part to play in helping them build on that reputation over the years to come."

The BBC believes it can continue to build on its strong relationship with the business once it is under new ownership.

SIS will provide opportunities for growth and investment that are not available whilst the business is owned by the Corporation, with the stability of fixed-term contracts in place with the BBC.

Mark Tugwell, Director, BBC Outside Broadcasts, said: "It's time for our business to flourish under new ownership, without the constraints of BBC ownership.

"The decision is absolutely right for our business and for our staff, and I'm looking forward to working with SIS to realise our potential."

As well as delivering a good deal for the BBC, SIS has also given assurances on pensions, and terms and conditions for staff in the Outside Broadcasts business.

The sale follows a review of the Corporation's commercial businesses.

Last summer, BBC Outside Broadcasts, BBC Studios and BBC Post Production, which operate under the BBC Resources Ltd banner, were put up for sale.

Due to the complex nature of this process the BBC has decided to complete the sale of its Outside Broadcasts business first whilst continuing discussions for Post Production.

The Studios business will be retained by the Corporation.