# Audio Description Open Standard File Format:
## Call for interest ahead of participation in standardisation

There is no *open standard* file format that supports the entire workflow for audio description ("AD", aka video description), from scripting to audio mixing. We would like to work with industry partners to make one and adopt it.

AD scripters, voicers, service providers, software and equipment manufacturers, broadcasters, distributors and the audience could all see benefits if such an open standard were created and adopted. Some have already voiced their support and tentatively agreed to consider participating in this activity.

These **benefits** include the ability to exchange documents interchangeably without vendor lock-in, to perform audio mixing at the preferred part of the distribution chain and to make the text script available for uses such as alternate presentation to the audience, search indexing, archival, metadata extraction etc.

**Requirements** for such a format were circulated at the W3C's TPAC meeting in October 2016, and are publicly viewable at https://github.com/w3c/ttml2/wiki/Audio-Description-Requirements. These requirements were drafted by the BBC based on existing working processes, and validated by peer review and with reference to the W3C's Media Accessibility User Requirements (https://www.w3.org/TR/media-accessibility-reqs/) . Further changes may be made.

The **proposed solution** is a profile of TTML2 (https://www.w3.org/TR/ttml2/) mainly consisting of the audio-related features. This profile is expected to be a short profile document: it has not yet been written. TTML2 is (if all goes well over the next couple of weeks) soon to become a W3C "Candidate Recommendation", and already includes the features needed within the proposed profile.

**Next Steps**: Gather together individuals and organisations willing to contribute to standardisation activity; Choose an appropriate standards group (e.g. W3C, EBU etc); draft and review the specification; write tests and implementations.

**Call to action**: Please contact me by email at nigel.megitt@bbc.co.uk if you would like to discuss this further or know that you would like to commit some kind of effort to progress this; I'm happy to chat about it further before setting anything formal up.

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