



Broadcasting  
Board of  
Governors

# FISCAL YEAR 2016 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET REQUEST



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Summary of Appropriations.....	11
Summary of Positions and FTE.....	12
<b>Summary of Investment Proposals</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Summary of Reduction Proposals</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Federal Entity Summaries</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Voice of America (VOA) .....	26
Spanish Language Grantee.....	38
International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB).....	50
Office of Technology, Services and Innovation (TSI).....	62
<b>Independent Grantee Organization Summaries</b> .....	<b>72</b>
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).....	72
Radio Free Asia (RFA).....	84
Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN).....	92
<b>Additional Summaries</b> .....	<b>104</b>
Broadcasting Capital Improvements (BCI).....	104
<b>Performance Budget Information</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>145</b>
Attachment A: Budget Charts .....	145
Voice of America Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	146
Office of Cuba Broadcasting Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	148
International Broadcasting Bureau Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	149
Technology, Services and Innovation Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	150
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	151
Radio Free Asia Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	152
Middle East Broadcasting Networks Summary of Appropriated Funds .....	153
Broadcasting Capital Improvements Summary of Appropriated Funds.....	154
Attachment B: Impact Model .....	155



## COUNTERING EXTREMISM AND PROPAGANDA

High-quality, on-the-ground reporting by BBG reporters are leveraged to bring news, information and alternative perspectives to regions where governments or terrorist groups spread misinformation and propaganda.

## Executive Summary

*Defending democracy and human rights is related to every enduring national interest. It aligns us with the aspirations of ordinary people throughout the world. We know from our own history people must lead their own struggles for freedom if those struggles are to succeed. But America is also uniquely situated – and routinely expected – to support peaceful democratic change.*

– U.S. National Security Strategy, February 2015

*Now, at this pivotal moment, we continue to face serious challenges to our national security... Violent extremism and an evolving terrorist threat raise a persistent risk of attacks on America and our allies. Escalating challenges to cybersecurity, aggression by Russia, the accelerating impacts of climate change, and the outbreak of infectious diseases all give rise to anxieties about global security. We must be clear-eyed about these and other challenges and recognize the United States has a unique capability to mobilize and lead the international community to meet them.*

– President’s Introductory Letter, National Security Strategy

The 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy makes clear that America must lead by example, with purpose, strength, capable partners, all the instruments of U.S. power, and a long-term perspective. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG, otherwise referred to in this document as “the Agency”) believes that in today’s interconnected world, information is a critical instrument of U.S. power that delivers demonstrable returns. BBG networks play a critical role in communicating directly with foreign publics supporting their aspirations for freedom and democracy. At the same time, the Agency embraces the role that professional journalism plays in ensuring effective information counter-balance to propaganda emanating from a growing list of state and non-state actors who manipulate and distort information to advance ends inimical to U.S. interests.

### **BBG: The US Government’s Civilian International Media**

BBG, in accordance with the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (as amended), oversees U.S. civilian international media, including the Voice of America (VOA), the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), and BBG-funded grantees Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc. (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA) and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc. (MBN). In addition, the Agency also oversees the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), which manages program distribution and marketing for the Agency and provides administrative support for VOA and OCB.

BBG distributes programming in 61 languages to more than 100 countries via radio (satellite, FM, medium wave (AM), and shortwave), terrestrial and

satellite TV, the web, live streaming, mobile devices and social media to a record weekly global audiences of 215 million people.

To allow the BBG to continue to support democratic change at a time of pressing national security challenges, dynamic global communications markets and government-wide spending constraints, the Agency respectfully requests FY 2016 funding of \$751.5 million in support of our mission:

**To inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.**

In FY 2016, BBG's strategic goals are supported by four overarching imperatives:

- Deliver unbiased journalism and information of the highest standards of quality;
- Support the development of democratic values in transitioning and closed information societies by creating open dialogue on issues not covered or discussed in domestic media;
- Counter propaganda and extremist rhetoric with credible news and information enabling audiences to positively contribute and participate in civil society; and
- Be the leading channel for information about the United States, explaining U.S. policy and providing perspectives on American life, values through reporting, analysis and commentary.

The global information environment has become a battleground. The role of Russian-language media in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine demonstrated how propaganda can have direct influence on events on the ground. In other parts of the world, non-State actors such as Hezbollah (Al Manar), al-Qaeda, ISIL and Boko Haram sow fear and incite violence through extremist rhetoric. These new actors offer a profound challenge to U.S. international media (USIM).

The rise of global digital networks – Internet, mobile, and social media – lowered the barriers to information dissemination, blurred the distinction between producer and consumer, and weakened the position of traditional media outlets, while also enabling an unprecedented level of public engagement and dialogue. As mobile devices provide news agencies millions of field “sensors,” social media provides journalists with new opportunities to listen, engage, and influence.

BBG is tackling these global challenges, particularly in keeping pace with digital change. At the same time, the Agency is taking stock of recent successes.

Success for BBG is ultimately to be influential. It is, in the spirit of Edward R. Murrow, to be persuasive. It was Murrow who famously said, “To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful. It is as simple as that.” BBG's new impact model is expanding the Agency's ability to gauge our influence with our audiences as well as with the media and governments in the countries we target.

Audience size, while just one metric, remains important and answers to the congressional mandate that BBG programs “reach a significant audience.” In 2014, BBG saw global audiences grow to a record 215 million people weekly, up from 175 million in 2012. Penetration is particularly strong in strategically vital countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Ukraine, and in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

In FY 2016, BBG is expanding its ability to be an influential source of accurate, credible news and information. Enhancing performance on digital platforms is a special priority, as news consumers increasingly turn to digital devices and mobile phones to access news and information. Our efforts going forward will also prioritize identifying and attracting strategic audiences selected by locale, country, or regions we believe are most important to achieving our strategic objectives.

We are taking an audience-first approach to fulfill our mission by targeting strategic audiences for our content. This requires smart strategies across the communications spectrum, from product branding and positioning to content selection, packaging and delivery – on all platforms, including traditional broadcast, web, social and mobile channels.

### **International Order**

Around the globe, freedom and democracy are under assault, imperiling U.S. interests, regional stability, and international order. Europe is witnessing a return to Cold War tensions of state

authority versus popular will. In the Middle East, societies continue to struggle to support even modest pluralism and regain the spirit of the Arab Spring as terrorist groups like ISIL gain strength. North Africa and the Sahel face rising extremism – from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria – rivaling the ferocity of the Taliban in South Asia. In support of the National Security Strategy’s regional objectives to bolster the International Order, in FY16, BBG “will undertake a number of targeted, strategic initiatives in our broadcast regions.

### **Advance Our Rebalance to Asia and the Pacific**

BBG is playing a vital role in supporting the democratic transition of countries in Southeast Asia and supporting the development of civil society. The Agency’s organizing principle is using media to ‘de-isolate’ South China Sea audiences by supporting regional awareness, documenting the truth behind the China’s activities in the region, and challenging the authoritarian Chinese model of development. Through Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America, we are mapping Chinese influence in the region, engaging audiences in supporting the development of their own civil societies, and making sure U.S. policies and activities are known and discussed. We are also ensuring that Chinese audiences are aware and understand the nature of their government’s actions in Southeast Asia by conveying objective reporting and analysis from the region into China.

## **Countering Russian Aggression in Europe and Around the Globe**

Russian aggression and Russian-language propaganda aim to destabilize Europe, threatening the interests of U.S. allies in the region. In response to a revanchist Russia, BBG has deployed an innovative multi-media effort aimed at Russians and Russian-speakers in the former Soviet Union (FSU), Europe and around the world. In FY 2016, BBG will focus on growing our network of media partners, from state broadcasters to individual producers that can provide credible journalism and information at scale in order to provide Russian language speakers with a fair and balanced picture of the world. We will also significantly increase our digital media products and platforms to reach Russians, as well as Russians living abroad. RFE/RL will lead in this effort in collaboration with VOA. A key goal is to provide everyday Russians with the information needed to assess their future and the future of their country's international policies. Building on the work done in FY 2014/2015, we will expand our work reaching Russian speakers on television, social media, mobile platforms, video and audio channels.

## **Seek Stability and Peace in the Middle East and North Africa**

In FY 2016, BBG will play a vital role in securing a more stable future for the people of Iraq and Syria by countering the influence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the region, and around the globe. We will focus on countering ISIL through two core actions: being a platform for moderate

secular and religious voices in shaping the future of Iraq, and delegitimizing ISIL and other extremists in the region and with potential foreign fighters abroad. MBN is implementing a multi-platform initiative ("Raise Your Voice") over television, radio and digital (social, web, mobile) to enable ordinary people to comment, discuss, and constructively provide Iraqi leaders with a clear picture of the lives and hopes of Iraqi citizens. VOA is expanding its programming in Kurdish Iraq and Turkey, targeting elites in improving their understanding of U.S. policy and actions. VOA is also using its global platform in distributing content that delegitimizes ISIL amongst potential foreign fighters and their families in Africa, Eurasia and Southeast Asia.

## **Invest in Africa's Future**

Africa is a region of both great opportunity and great peril, with rising security concerns from extremist groups, but also steady economic growth, and a young, engaged population with great promise. BBG has made substantial new investments in Africa broadcasting, which will pay dividends in increased audience engagement in out years. In FY 2016, VOA will continue to implement these new programs and new channels, including increased video production in widely-spoken languages, construction and programming of FM stations in major African cities, mobile streams to reach young people, and content in vernacular languages including Somali, Hausa, and Bambara specifically targeted to populations vulnerable to extremist recruitment.

### **Deepen Cooperation in the Americas**

In FY 2016, BBG will begin the process of creating a new grantee that will combine elements of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting and the VOA Latin America Division and be responsible for all Spanish-language broadcasting. The new grantee will build on a legacy of success in the region. VOA Spanish works cooperatively with a network of major media outlets in the region to provide highly-valued news and information about the United States and the world to a measured weekly audience of more than 25 million people. OCB's Radio and TV Martí have succeeded in creating a network of journalists to report on developments in Cuba, one of the world's most repressive media environments, providing a unique lifeline to the outside world.

### **Security**

BBG's professional journalism, as noted above, is a critical asset in the U.S. National Security Strategy. It has enduring value in helping to foster free, open, democratic societies, which tend to be more peaceful and prosperous than non-democratic societies and seldom threaten their neighbors or harbor extremists. In the shorter term, BBG journalism produces effects that serve a wide range of security interests, from accurately conveying U.S. policy, to countering harmful propaganda, to preventing terrorist recruitment, to providing vital health information to help stop pandemics. BBG broadcasters provide essential platforms for audiences to air their grievances, call for action, and engage in civil dialogue on critical issues. To cite specific examples:

- In Somalia, Nigeria, and Iraq we counter violent extremist propaganda with frank on-air and online discussion of radicalism.
- In a host of countries, from Burma to Belarus, we ease inter-ethnic and inter-religious strife with roundtable discussions that bring diverse parties together to bridge differences and model civil discourse.
- In Iraq/Syria, we aid the besieged citizenry with reports on life-and-death developments.
- In Iran, we provide timely, accurate information on the progress of nuclear negotiations to a huge audience of ordinary Iranians.
- In Ebola-wracked West Africa, we provide vital prevention and treatment information over the media platforms audiences are most likely to access.

### **Values**

Since VOA's inaugural broadcast in 1942, U.S. government funded international media has reflected American values and American leadership. Through our support for professional journalism, free expression, and the communication of the American democratic experience, BBG empowers civil societies and emerging leaders to work for change, seek universal rights, and realize their democratic aspirations.

### **Professional Journalism**

The BBG networks produce quality journalism of exceptional value and utility to our audiences. This journalism includes breaking news, human rights reporting, coverage of official

corruption, English learning, health and education information and empowers audiences to understand their world and make informed decisions for themselves, their families, and societies. Moving forward, we must also identify underserved audiences that are subject to propaganda and denied access to news and information that can empower them. These audiences, such as young people, women, and the politically or socially marginalized, can be important drivers of change in their societies.

In addition to producing and distributing valuable news and information, BBG works to improve the local media environments we serve, through partnerships with broadcasters and training for journalists and other media professionals.

Around the world, and providing more than half of the Agency's total audience—more than 100 million people weekly—2,500 affiliated radio and television stations and digital platforms carry BBG content. We engage with affiliates to support the viability of independent media in targeted countries, but also expand our audiences and increasingly use our platform as a means to build collaborative relationships amongst our affiliates to support a robust local media sector.

### **Free Expression**

BBG is about engaging and connecting audiences and ensuring there is a rich media environment for audiences to experience the world. Through all forms of digital, social and traditional media, the Agency converses with audiences

soliciting their views, facilitating sharing of our information, and encouraging redistribution of BBG content. In countries such as China and Russia, seeding domestic information streams with news content, analysis and commentary to support local use and reuse before government censors is an important BBG operation.

We work to ensure audiences enjoy the universal right to seek information by opposing efforts to restrict information and punish speech. In closed societies our Internet Anti-Censorship (IAC) programs are enabling audiences' access to open information sources that power the development of civil society and holding despotic regimes to account.

We focus on disseminating content, and expanding access to the Internet, also offering citizen and professional journalists tools to report safely without detection by government surveillance. This work is increasingly important in countries like China, Cuba and Iran that are bolstering firewalls to keep outside information from getting in and inside information from getting out.

### **American Democracy**

President John F. Kennedy, in a speech commemorating VOA's 20th anniversary in 1962, framed the telling of America's story eloquently: "What we do here in this country, and what we are, what we want to be, represents really a great experiment in the most difficult kind of self-discipline, and that is the organization and maintenance and development of the process of free government. And it is your task ... to tell

that story around the world.” Telling America’s story is a significant part of BBG’s Congressional mandate. VOA and MBN cover the United States in all of its complexity, as a mirror, not a mouthpiece, illustrating the nation’s democratic process, so that countries we target, struggling to nurture their own democratic systems, might learn from the American experience.

Conveying and critically assessing development and implementation of U.S. policy is also a key component of BBG’s mission. American leadership depends in part on international audiences knowing where the United States stands with respect to their countries and issues that affect them.

### **BBG Reform and Progress**

By virtue of historical circumstance, today’s BBG is a complex amalgam of diverse media outlets and respective support organizations, operating under different legal and administrative frameworks. This structure has limited the organization’s agility in responding to a rapidly evolving global media environment, as well as its ability to make consistently rational resource allocations. Significant progress has been made toward the fundamental transformation necessary for BBG to appropriately fulfill its charter amidst growing geo-political instability and substantial budgetary challenges, and the agency continues to undertake major internal reform efforts.

Under the leadership of a revitalized Board of Governors, creating the position of a CEO has been a key BBG objective. The search for a new CEO is

ongoing, however it is imperative that the Congress enacts the proposed language to establish a CEO in statute and properly and legally delegate the day-to-day operational responsibilities of the Board to the CEO. Under the proposed CEO legislation, the Board of Governors will fulfill the important visionary, long-term strategy, and journalistic firewall role while the CEO will conduct the day-to-day aspects of running the Agency including personnel management, budget, and congressional outreach.

BBG is also taking steps to harmonize multiple language services that operate in the same market through enhanced collaboration among the networks. In countries where two network language services operate side-by-side, BBG is clarifying their respective roles and goals, differentiating their content, and promoting shared media platforms. Progress was made in FY 2014 with major harmonization between VOA and RFE/RL in Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Further work is now underway in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the FATA region of Pakistan.

BBG has taken significant steps to deepen understanding of our impact, as noted above. The new impact model tracks qualitative as well as quantitative indicators for each component of the BBG mission (to inform, engage, and connect) to show influence within the audiences, media and governments in BBG’s target markets over the short-, medium-, and long-term. Indicators include whether our news and programs are seen by audiences as reliable and trustworthy and whether they help

increase our audiences' understanding and help them form opinions. Engagement with our content, especially on digital platforms – whether audiences are moved to do something after consuming our content, such as commenting on it, sharing it or recommending to friends – is yet another performance area BBG is closely tracking.

Achieving operational efficiencies is equally critical to BBG's future – to save money, allocate scarce resources to priority areas, and improve the performance of Agency support services. Increased collaboration between the Office of the Chief Information Officer and Administrative Support Services underpins projects to integrate, automate, and standardize BBG business systems, beginning with an integrated platform for timekeeping, human resources, and payroll.

FY 2016 will see completion of several projects that, over five years, transformed the Agency's technological infrastructure from an outdated set of disconnected, poorly performing, and insecure systems into one of the most advanced technical environments in the Federal government.

BBG optimization efforts, particularly using technology to replace paper-based systems and enhance workflows, have significantly improved the Agency's ability to respond quickly to changing geo-political circumstances and nurture employee morale while producing savings that have gone to serving the journalistic mission.

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the notable areas within this **\$751.5 million budget** request include:

- **\$476.6 million** for International Broadcasting Operations, including VOA, TSI, OCB, and IBB operations,
- **\$10.0 million** for Broadcasting Capital Improvements,
- **\$15.6 million** in cuts from reducing language service overlap and selected broadcast languages, streamlining central news operations, optimizing information technology, reducing less effective cross-border transmissions, and realizing efficiencies in support services,
- **\$12.5 million** in Internet anti-censorship funding, and
- **\$2 million** for overseas, non-BBG journalist training.

## PRIORITY FY 2016 INVESTMENTS INCLUDE:

- **Countering Russian Aggression**
- **Countering the ISIL Narrative**

Table 1: Summary of Appropriations

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors**  
**Summary of Appropriations**  
**FY 2014 - FY 2016**  
*(\$ in thousands)*

Program, Project, and Activity by Account <i>International Broadcast Operations</i>	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request	FY 2016 CBJ vs. FY 2015 Program Plan
<b>Federal Entities</b>					
Voice of America (with OCO for FY 2014 and FY 2015)	\$ 202,206	\$ 201,639	\$ 212,497	\$ 206,683	\$ (5,814)
Office of Cuba Broadcasting	\$ 27,043	\$ 26,692	\$ 27,130	\$ 30,321	\$ 3,191
International Broadcasting Bureau	\$ 67,000	\$ 65,495	\$ 61,018	\$ 61,010	\$ (8)
Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation <i>Internet Freedom; Anti-Censorship</i>	\$ 187,818	\$ 177,938	\$ 185,109	\$ 178,586	\$ (6,523)
<b>Total, Federal Entities</b>	<b>\$ 484,067</b>	<b>\$ 471,764</b>	<b>\$ 485,754</b>	<b>\$ 476,600</b>	<b>\$ (9,154)</b>
<b>Non-Federal Entities</b>					
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (with OCO for FY 2014 and FY 2015)	\$ 95,950	\$ 95,260	\$ 103,850	\$ 116,800	\$ 12,950
Radio Free Asia	\$ 35,950	\$ 48,355	\$ 38,255	\$ 38,500	\$ 245
Middle East Broadcasting Networks (with OCO for FY 2015)	\$ 109,513	\$ 106,178	\$ 109,408	\$ 109,600	\$ 192
<b>Total, Non-Federal Entities</b>	<b>\$ 241,413</b>	<b>\$ 249,793</b>	<b>\$ 251,513</b>	<b>\$ 264,900</b>	<b>\$ 13,387</b>
<b>Total, International Broadcasting Operations</b>	<b>\$ 725,480</b>	<b>\$ 721,557</b>	<b>\$ 737,267</b>	<b>\$ 741,500</b>	<b>\$ 4,233</b>
<b>Broadcasting Capital Improvements</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ 7,812</b>	<b>\$ 4,800</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,200</b>
<b>Total, Broadcasting Capital Improvements</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ 7,812</b>	<b>\$ 4,800</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,200</b>
<b>BBG GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 733,480</b>	<b>\$ 729,369</b>	<b>\$ 742,067</b>	<b>\$ 751,500</b>	<b>\$ 9,433</b>
<b>Summary Of Resources</b>					
<b>International Broadcasting Operations Account</b>	<b>\$ 725,480</b>	<b>\$ 725,480</b>	<b>\$ 737,267</b>	<b>\$ 741,500</b>	<b>\$ 4,233</b>
Appropriated	\$ 721,080	\$ 721,080	\$ 726,567	\$ 741,500	\$ 14,933
Appropriated (Overseas Contingency Operations)	\$ 4,400	\$ 4,400	\$ 10,700	\$ 0	\$ (10,700)
<b>Broadcasting Capital Improvements Account</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,800</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,200</b>
Appropriated	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 4,800	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,200
<b>BBG GRAND TOTAL - Appropriation/Request</b>	<b>\$ 733,480</b>	<b>\$ 733,480</b>	<b>\$ 742,067</b>	<b>\$ 751,500</b>	<b>\$ 9,433</b>

Table 2: Summary of Positions and FTEs

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Summary of Positions and FTE  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

	FY 2014			FY 2015 Program Plan			FY 2016 Request		
	On-board Positions	Full-time Equivalent	Funded Positions	Full-time Equivalent	Funded Positions	Full-time Equivalent	Funded Positions	Full-time Equivalent	
<b>International Broadcasting Operations</b>									
<b>Federal Employees</b>									
<b>Voice of America</b>	1,115	1,100	1,239	1,224	1,199	1,182			
American/Domestic Employees	1,079	1,074	1,213	1,210	1,173	1,168			
Foreign Nationals DH/Personnel Service Agreements	36	26	26	14	26	14			
<b>Office of Cuba Broadcasting</b>	125	126	131	132	156	157			
American/Domestic Employees	125	126	131	132	156	157			
<b>International Broadcasting Bureau</b>	213	219	237	219	238	233			
American/Domestic Employees	201	212	225	212	226	226			
Foreign Nationals DH/Personnel Service Agreements	12	7	12	7	12	7			
<b>Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation</b>	409	290	459	354	454	349			
American/Domestic Employees	160	163	168	169	163	164			
Foreign Nationals DH/Personnel Service Agreements	249	128	291	185	291	185			
<b>Subtotal, Federal Employees</b>	<b>1,862</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>2,066</b>	<b>1,929</b>	<b>2,047</b>	<b>1,921</b>			
<b>Non-Federal Entities</b>									
<b>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty</b>	503		653		720				
Employees	503		653		720				
<b>Radio Free Asia</b>	240		251		251				
Employees	240		251		251				
<b>Middle East Broadcasting Networks</b>	792		972		981				
Employees	792		972		981				
<b>Subtotal, Non-Federal Employees</b>	<b>1,535</b>		<b>1,876</b>		<b>1,952</b>				
<b>TOTAL, Broadcasting Board of Governors</b>	<b>3,397</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>3,942</b>	<b>1,929</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>1,921</b>			





## A ROBUST RESPONSE TO A REVANCHIST RUSSIA AND THE ISIL NARRATIVE

Top: RFE/RL will use high-quality news, information, analysis, and feature programming through a multi-platform global initiative to counter Russian propaganda. Bottom: MBN will lead digital and surge programming to counter ISIL with support from U.S. international media to offer alternative perspectives to the ISIL narrative..

## Summary of Investment Proposals

The FY 2016 budget continues to align to the BBG 2014-2018 strategic plan. This request builds on investments and reductions in FY 2015, and reflects the critical role of BBG broadcasts in support of U.S. national interests. This budget reflects efforts to find efficiencies, increase collaboration among BBG-funded activities, and reach audiences on the most effective broadcast platforms.

The FY 2016 requested budget will enable the Agency to support critical base operations and capital requirements while investing in regional infrastructure for rapid content production and audience building during global crises. These investments will focus on high-priority global regions and help build the organization and infrastructure best suited for the fast-paced future of media. They will enable BBG to adapt quickly to evolving circumstances, thanks to state-of-the-art infrastructure and technology.

Table 3: FY 2016 Proposed Investments

<b>Proposed Investments</b>	<b>Funding</b> <i>(\$ in millions)</i>
<b>Countering a Revanchist Russia</b>	\$15.40
<b>Countering The ISIL Narrative</b>	\$6.10
<b>Convert Television Production to HDTV</b>	\$2.50
<b>Enhance High Frequency Transmission Capability</b>	\$2.80
<b>Enhanced High Definition Satellite Television</b>	\$1.00
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$27.80</b>

## 1) COUNTERING A REVANCHIST RUSSIA (RFE/RL: \$15.4M)

U.S. national interests are best served by a Russia that is free and democratic and an integrated, constructive stakeholder in the international community. Over the past 15 years, Russia has been headed in the opposite direction, with authoritarianism and anti-Western policies that today threaten Russia's neighbors and, by extension, the United States and its Western allies.

Russian pressure and aggressive acts are not limited to the actions in Eastern Ukraine, or in the "frozen conflict" zones of Georgia or Moldova. Russia has launched a world-wide disinformation apparatus undermining growing freedoms and democratization that conflict with the Kremlin's narrow interests. The Kremlin exploits freedom of information to inject disinformation. The goal is not to persuade (as in classic public diplomacy) or earn credibility but to sow confusion via conspiracy theories and to spread falsehoods. Information is a tool to confuse, blackmail, demoralize, subvert and paralyze, and create alternate realities. "Information war is now the main type of war," says chief Kremlin propagandist Dmitry Kiselyev, "preparing the way for military action."

U.S. international media (USIM) is leading a effort by the United States government to counter pressures from the Government of Russia, by deploying flexible, innovative, assertive multi-media initiatives aimed at Russians and Russian-speakers in the former Soviet Union, Europe and around the world. RFE/RL is strengthening unique and

complementary programming in Russian aimed at the former Soviet space and within Russia. USIM is also expanding its fact-based journalism and cogent analysis to refute Russian propaganda, including in English, aimed at other countries, especially Europe, that are vital to U.S. national interests and where Russian media channels are striving to influence new audiences.

Building on 70 years of experience broadcasting to the Soviet Union and its successor states, RFE/RL will deliver high-quality news, information, analysis, and feature programming through a multi-platform global initiative. Because television is by far the leading platform for news in Russia, the former Soviet space, and markets targeted by Russian propaganda around the world, it will play a central role in this initiative. Concurrently, RFE/RL is using digital platforms to reach Russians in broadcast denied zones, which are rapidly gaining in popularity for news, and offer new, creative opportunities to engage and connect audiences.

### **Television**

Building on the success of FY 2015 television programs, RFE/RL will add additional television content to expand reach and impact in the former Soviet space. In partnership with affiliate partner TV stations in the Russian periphery, RFE/RL will expand Russian-language television programming to at least four hours daily. Additional programs will include documentaries, roundtable discussions, VIP interviews and satire. In addition, RFE/RL is

developing a Caucasus version of the 30-minute “Current Time” Russian-language program, drawing on material from the European and Central Asian versions and adding targeted Caucasus content. Other proposed TV and video projects will emphasize citizen engagement, including new programming focusing on building bridges between otherwise disconnected communities, such as between Chisinau and Tiraspol in Moldova, west and east Ukraine, and Ukraine and Russia.

### **Digital Media**

RFE/RL began adding significant amounts of new content and multi-platform digital programming for Russia and the former Soviet Union following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014. To further broaden the reach and impact of these and new programming initiatives while increasing focus on engagement with Russian speakers

globally, in FY 2015 RFE/RL will create a new digital media department, DIGM, that includes a dedicated social media team to confront misinformation in the Russian-media sphere via multiple social-media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, VKontakte and Odnoklassniki). This team will also utilize WhatsApp to function as a mobile push-messaging service targeting potential new audiences.

Key initiatives that will launch in FY 2015 and carry through into FY 2016 include *Footage vs Footage*, a daily video product that directly challenges Russian television propaganda, and *Rus2Web*, a YouTube site and channel curated by RFE/RL that will serve as “digital samizdat,” giving voice to independent Russian-language journalists and filmmakers whose work is not readily available, or is even banned, by Kremlin-controlled media.

## 2) COUNTERING THE ISIL NARRATIVE (MBN: \$3.7M; VOA: \$2.4M)

In support of U.S. foreign policy objectives, USIM is playing a vital part in securing a more stable future for the people of Iraq. The BBG is focused on countering ISIL through two core actions: being a platform for moderate secular and religious voices in shaping the future of Iraq, and delegitimizing ISIL and other extremists in the region and potential foreign fighters abroad. MBN is implementing a multi-platform initiative (*Raise Your Voice*) over television, radio and digital (social, web, mobile) to enable ordinary people to comment, discuss, and constructively provide Iraqi

leaders with a clear picture of the lives and hopes of Iraqi citizens. VOA is expanding its programming in Kurdish for Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, targeting elites and improving their understanding of U.S. policy and actions. VOA is also using its global platform in distributing content that delegitimizes ISIL to its audiences in Africa, Eurasia and Southeast Asia, where young people are vulnerable to recruitment as foreign fighters.

### ***Raise Your Voice Campaign (MBN)***

The *Raise Your Voice* campaign consists of radio and television call-in programs that encourage positive discussion dealing with the root causes of ISIL recruiting (unemployment, sectarianism, disenfranchised with the government). *Raise Your Voice* programming also encourages solutions and elevates the all-important voice of moderation. Alhurra-Iraq is producing a monthly Town Hall Meeting with political and religious leaders, giving viewers a chance to ask questions directly to them, thereby opening a frank and direct dialogue. Other television programs include a weekly program from Irbil in Arabic focusing on the underrepresented Kurdish perspective, and another program that shines a spotlight on Iraqis looking for ways to improve their lives and their country in spite of ISIL. On the digital front, MBN will create a community at [www.irfaaswatak.com](http://www.irfaaswatak.com) (Speak Up) and its associated Facebook page where critical issues that lead to violent extremism are discussed openly and respectfully. The project is not driven by daily news events but rather by introducing a single "root issue" topic that is discussed for two weeks by essayists, reporters and the wider community. Across MBN Iraq specific themes and topics will transcend each of the platforms for a cohesive discussion.

### **Surge Programming Targeted at Refuting/Undercutting ISIL Propaganda**

VOA Kurdish and VOA Turkish are significantly expanding enterprise reporting from Iraqi Kurdistan, and the Turkish/Syria border areas to gather more audio, video and digital content. VOA Kurdish will launch a 30-50 minute TV program on NRT, the leading television channel in Kurdistan. VOA Turkish will launch a second 15-minute TV program for current affiliate TGRT and is working on a new media partner for a new talk show format for another Turkish television channel.

### **Leverage USIM's Global Platforms to Staunch the Flow of Foreign Fighters**

VOA is leveraging its global platform to target young audiences (15-24, primarily male) in key global markets that feed foreign fighters to ISIL. VOA, in collaboration with MBN, will identify content (generally not news, focused on enterprise & creative) countering ISIL's narrative, and translate and re-package that content for distribution in targeted countries. It will be a mixture of new short 'fact check' features and focused news reports as well as content amplifying existing anti-ISIL satire. BBG networks will target audiences in North Africa (MBN), Gulf States (MBN), Afghanistan/Pakistan (VOA, RFE/RL), the Balkans (VOA, RFE/RL) and Russia/Caucuses (RFE/RL).

### 3) CONVERT TELEVISION PRODUCTION TO HDTV–WASHINGTON (\$2.5M)

This proposal continues BBG's FY 2015 high definition television (HDTV) migration project, a multi-year effort to convert all VOA television productions to HD, which is increasingly the quality standard demanded by viewers around the world. Failure by BBG to quickly

adopt HD technology will disrupt the Agency's ability to secure and maintain affiliates and attract audiences. As part of this investment, VOA also will upgrade television studios and production equipment to ensure HD compatibility.

### 4) ENHANCE HIGH FREQUENCY TRANSMISSION CAPABILITY (\$2.8M)

BBG will continue the shortwave realignment project that began in FY 2014, which increases shortwave transmission capability at its Kuwait Transmitting Station. This enhancement provides improved coverage to underserved areas of the world and reduces operating costs by decreasing reliance on external leases. All aspects of this proposal focus on improving transmission capability, while continuing to reach audiences in Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Tibet and Western China. The added capacity will support broadcasts for RFE/RL, RFA and VOA.

At \$2.00 per broadcast hour, Kuwait provides the highest return on investment in the BBG transmitting station portfolio. Thus, BBG began expansion of the facility in FY 2014 with the construction of a new high frequency antenna and design of the transmitter building expansion. The proposed investment, extending through FY 2018, will bring the Kuwait Transmitting Station up to the maximum capability allowed by the country agreement and will enable the Agency to decrease overall operating costs for the foreseeable future. When the realignment project is completed, the Kuwait station will have ten shortwave transmitters with associated antennas.

### 5) ENHANCE HIGH DEFINITION SATELLITE TELEVISION (\$1.0M)

This enhancement strengthens the distribution of IBB high definition video feeds started in FY 2014, and includes leasing capacity on regional satellites to add HD television channels for VOA Persian, VOA/RFA China TV (in Mandarin, Cantonese, Tibetan and Uyghur) and MBN's Alhurra.

BBG's strategy is to deliver content to as many users as possible and increase direct-to-home satellite distribution of video and audio content. This investment will expand BBG's audiences by using the most widely watched regional, direct-to-home satellites.



## Summary of Reduction Proposals

The FY 2016 budget request includes reductions and investments that rebalance the Agency's resources away from low priority legacy markets and antiquated platforms, toward foreign policy priorities (including the Russian periphery and the Middle East), and modern media platforms such as FM radio, television and digital media. In keeping with this strategy, BBG proposes to make targeted reductions aimed at

minimizing unnecessary administrative costs, evolving away from less effective transmissions, and reducing or eliminating service in low priority and low impact several languages. BBG also seeks to reduce language service duplication in several markets, increasing efficiency and boosting impact by ensuring coordinated, complementary operations and content where two BBG broadcasters co-exist.

Table 4: FY 2016 Proposed Reductions

<b>Proposed Reductions</b>	<b>Funding</b> <i>(\$ in millions)</i>
<b>International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB)</b>	<b>\$1.30</b>
Reduce Administrative Costs	
<b>Technology, Services &amp; Innovations (TSI)</b>	<b>\$4.60</b>
Reduce Shortwave Costs	
Decrease Contracting Expenditures	
Capture Salary Savings	
<b>Voice of America (VOA)</b>	<b>\$5.80</b>
Reduce Administrative Costs	
Discontinue Indonesian Radio	
Discontinue Low Priority Language Services	
Reduce Low Priority Language Services	
Rationalize Afghan Radio Services	
<b>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)</b>	<b>\$1.49</b>
Reduce Administrative Costs	
Restructure News and Current Affairs	
Reduce North Caucasus Broadcasting	
Discontinue Low Priority Language Services	
<b>Radio Free Asia (RFA)</b>	<b>\$0.280</b>
Close Bangkok Office	
<b>Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN)</b>	<b>\$2.13</b>
Offset of Operational Costs	
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$15.60</b>

The following are summaries of the proposed reductions included in the request:

1) INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING BUREAU (IBB) [\$1.3M REDUCTION]

**Reduce Administrative Costs**

International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) offices will make administrative reductions in areas such as travel, contractor support, supplies and representational funds. Reductions will be made in the following offices:

Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Communications and External Affairs, Civil Rights, Contracts, Policy, Performance Review, Human Resources, Strategy and Development, and Digital and Design Innovation

2) TECHNOLOGY, SERVICES, AND INNOVATION (TSI) – [\$4.6M REDUCTION]

**Reduce Shortwave Costs [-\$2.90M]**

The Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI) will eliminate less effective transmission frequencies and realign transmissions to end high cost leases. TSI will realize additional reductions to antiquated technologies by reducing transmissions to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, and Kurdish-speaking regions and eliminating shortwave to Russia, the Caucasus, Belarus, Laos, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Burundi. Audiences in these countries access news and information on more efficient, digital platforms.

and prices, reducing technical support contracts, and reducing contract managerial personnel and project managers. This budget request includes a reduction of eight contractors.

**Capture Salary Savings [-\$1.05M]**

Savings in salaries will be achieved by attrition, improved efficiencies and streamlined operations. The personnel reductions will focus on non-front line employees to maintain the current level of service to BBG broadcasting networks. The reduction of seven positions is approximately 4 percent below the FY 2015 budget request level for domestic employees

**Decrease Contracting Expenditures [-\$0.65M]**

Management support contracts will be reduced in fiscal year 2016. Reductions will be realized at TSI headquarters by cutting the number of administrative contractors, insourcing selected functions, renegotiating contract terms

### 3) VOICE OF AMERICA (VOA) [\$5.8M REDUCTION]

#### **Reduce Administrative Costs [-\$1.6M]**

VOA will continue to streamline Agency operations by reducing the amount of contracted administrative staff and reducing overtime by 50 percent. This reduction will target non-content providing offices and will not impact the number of FTEs or broadcast hours.

#### **Discontinue Indonesian Radio [-\$1.0M]**

VOA Indonesian radio programming will be discontinued. Media research from Indonesia shows that television is the dominant medium, with digital/online platforms gaining in popularity. The most recent BBG survey conducted by Gallup in Indonesia (February-April 2014) reports a small radio audience for VOA (1.8 percent) compared to a large and increasing VOA television audience (18.5 percent). VOA Indonesian TV will continue to broadcast 3.83 hours of TV weekly. The service will be reduced by 13 FTEs and three contractors. While Indonesia remains a foreign policy and broadcast priority, the service will shift resources away from broadcasting on radio to maximize the distribution of its television content and build its online audience.

#### **Discontinue Low Priority Language Services [-\$1.3M]**

BBG is shifting resources to high priority language services including French to Africa and to programs that reach minority Russian speaking populations in former Soviet Union countries. This reduction will eliminate the Central Africa Service (7 FTEs) and the VOA Lao Service (5 FTEs). VOA will continue to broadcast to audiences in Central Africa in English, French, and Swahili. RFA will continue to broadcast in Lao.

#### **Reduce Low Priority Language Services [-\$0.2M]**

BBG is shifting resources to high priority language services including French to Africa and to programs that reach minority Russian speaking populations in former Soviet Union countries. The Zimbabwe Service's daily radio programming will be scaled back by 30 minutes. Research indicates that English radio listening is on the decline in Zimbabwe and that most of VOA's radio audience listens in Shona. VOA will transfer responsibility for English language Zimbabwe-oriented programming to the VOA's English to Africa and Worldwide English Services. VOA will shift its English strategy for Zimbabwe to focus more on digital and television products, which will be produced by the English Division. VOA's Shona and Ndebele Services will continue to broadcast daily radio programs.

**Rationalize Afghan Radio Services [-\$1.7M]**

Afghanistan remains a high priority for both U.S. foreign policy and international media. VOA will rebalance its broadcasting to Afghanistan, focusing on TV and the prime morning and evening radio hours. Under this proposal, VOA will maintain a total of

three hours of radio daily in Dari and Pashto; RFE/RL will continue to provide 12 hours of radio daily. Those hours will be filled with both Dari and Pashto broadcasts. VOA will continue its highly successful TV Ashna. This reduction will eliminate 15 encumbered positions.

**4) RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY (RFE/RL) [\$1.49M REDUCTION]**

**Reduce Administrative Costs [-\$0.34M]**

By reducing administrative expenses, RFE/RL will realize significant savings with no adverse impact on programming.

**Restructure News and Current Affairs [-\$0.68M]**

RFE/RL will restructure the News and Current Affairs Office to achieve savings with no reduction of program hours.

**Reduce North Caucasus Broadcasting [-\$0.27M]**

Reaching audiences in the North Caucasus remains a high foreign policy and broadcast priority; however, RFE/RL will adjust its tactics, and discontinue programming in the Avar and Circassian languages, while realigning those resources to strengthen programming in Chechen and Russian. Avar and

Circassian content has struggled to find an audience, as speakers of these languages are unlikely to use cross-border radio frequencies (shortwave and medium wave), and RFE/RL is unable to affiliate with local stations due to Russian government restrictions. Because most Avar and Circassian speakers consume primarily Russian-language media, increased RFE/RL Russian content, distributed through social networks and the web, will better serve these audiences.

**Discontinue Low Priority Language Services [-\$0.2M]**

BBG is shifting resources to high priority language services including French to Africa and to programs that reach minority Russian speaking populations in former Soviet Union countries. This reduction will discontinue the RFE/RL Macedonian service.

5) RADIO FREE ASIA (RFA) [\$0.28M REDUCTION]

**Close the Bangkok Office [-\$0.28M]**

Now that Radio Free Asia has established a fully staffed bureau in

Rangoon, RFA will close its Bangkok office to achieve these savings.

6) MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING NETWORKS (MBN) [\$2.13M REDUCTION]

**Offset Operational Costs [-\$2.13M]**

The grant to MBN will be reduced by \$2.13 million in FY 2016. MBN plans to offset operational costs by utilizing

recoveries from prior year MBN obligations.

# Voice of America

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	<b>\$202,206</b>	<b>\$212,497</b>	<b>\$206,683</b>

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

- **This FY 2016 Budget request proposes an investment in VOA to continue its migration to high definition television as both affiliates and direct-to-home satellite providers increasingly demand production and distribution in this format. The investment in this multi-year effort includes upgrading television studios and production equipment to ensure HD compatibility. Failure by BBG to quickly adopt HD technology will disrupt the Agency’s ability to secure and maintain affiliates and build new audiences.**
- **In response to global foreign policy priorities and the Administration’s global engagement strategy, VOA will continue the investments that began in FY 2015 by ending broadcasts in Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, and Lao languages, making administrative cuts in VOA support offices, in overtime pay, Indonesian radio, and reducing Afghan radio.**



In 2014, VOA provided extensive coverage of the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

## OVERVIEW

Voice of America is a trusted source of news and information in nearly 50 languages for 172 million people each week. The first U.S. international broadcaster, VOA today uses 27 percent of the Agency budget to draw 80 percent of the Agency audience.

VOA is where a Tibetan blogger appears live on Mandarin-language television calling on Facebook to restore a deleted post about self-immolation.

It's where a Farsi-language new year's message from State Department Foreign Service Officer Sarah Grow receives nearly 300,000 web hits in two days. VOA is where the battle for Kobani is told from both sides of the border, as Turkish and Kurdish-language reporters join to present singular coverage of the fight against Islamic State militants.

VOA is attracting new and younger audiences in crowded and competitive markets through innovative programming and diverse delivery platforms including mobile streaming, video podcasts, direct-to-home-satellite, cable, and targeted FM broadcasts. Audiences using mobile devices and social media grew exponentially in the past year as VOA adopted "digital first" production to better meet the portable, immediate, and interactive demands of the tech-savvy leaders of tomorrow.

VOA maintains a broad network of FM affiliate partners as well as wholly-owned FM stations while sustaining shortwave broadcasts where still viable, including the Sahel, where Islamist extremists continue to carry out attacks, and in information-deprived societies such as North Korea and Tibet.

VOA engages audiences in discussions about the United States and world events with programming that not only ensures a broad understanding of American values and viewpoints but also enhances respect for the United States as a nation that values truth and fairness.

As America's international state broadcaster, VOA helps export the "soft power" of First Amendment freedoms when we interview Congressional critics of President Obama's policies on health care or Ukraine, when our female television presenters read the news for Muslim audiences without covering their heads, and when we open debate on the U.S. death penalty in the trial of the Boston marathon bomber.

## FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crises and Unrest**

Ukraine  
Central African Republic  
Thailand

Nigeria  
West Africa

### **Supporting Democracy and Countering Extremism**

Afghanistan  
Somalia  
Myanmar

Iran  
Mali  
North Korea

### **Reaching Key Markets on the Most Effective Platforms**

Targeted Mix to Russia  
VOA Hausa: Over Four Million Visits per Month Online and On Mobile  
VOA Chinese Increases Social Media Engagement  
VOA Kurdish Provided Targeted Content On TV, Digital & Social Media  
VOA Khmer Popular on Facebook  
*Reaching Somalia on TV and Online*

### **Expanding Impact Through Partnerships**

Increasing Audience Share in Indonesia  
Russian Business Channel Partnership  
Radio Partnering in Pakistan  
Circumventing Nigerian Government Ban

### **Providing In-Depth Coverage and Special Programs**

VOA AIDS Documentary Airs  
Young African Leaders Initiative  
Anti-Corruption Reporting  
Bronze Medal for VOA Tibetan Film

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Anti-Extremism Efforts in Africa**

### **Restructuring Central News & English**

### **Enhanced Efforts in Kurdistan**

### **New Contracting Model**

It's straightforward reporting from Ferguson, Missouri that sustains VOA's reputation as a reliable source for credible and comprehensive news and analysis when state-run media in China suppresses coverage of protests in Hong Kong. It's balanced reporting on electoral politics in Zimbabwe and Nigeria that champions free and fair elections when state-run media in Russia seeks to justify an unconstitutional referendum in Crimea.

VOA's global network of reporters, its sound journalistic practices, and its daily example of free speech make it a unique voice in international broadcasting. Combating ignorance, propaganda, and

anti-Americanism, VOA promotes U.S. ideals and culture while helping to save lives with information for audiences facing conflict and disease.

VOA is widely viewed by its audiences as a trusted source for credible and comprehensive news and analysis. Through its global network of reporters, sound journalistic practices, and support of free speech, VOA engages audiences in discussion about the United States and world events. VOA programming not only ensures a broad understanding of American values and viewpoints, but it also enhances respect for the United States as a nation where truth and fairness are highly valued.



VOA Spanish reaches a growing audience across Latin America with breaking news and interactives from Washington, D.C.

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



VOA covers protests during the crisis in Ukraine.

### Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crises and Unrest

#### UKRAINE

VOA's television audience in Ukraine has doubled since the Russian invasion of Crimea. With new Ukrainian Service programming and new affiliate partnerships, VOA continues to help counter pro-Kremlin disinformation and refocus on the U.S. and Western response to Russian aggression. The daily Russian-language television newscast *Studio Washington* now appears on both satellite and on the popular Ukrainian TV networks ICTV and Channel 24. VOA supplies the English-language Ukraine Today network with original interviews and produced packages as well as Central News correspondent reports from the

frontline of fighting in the east, from Moscow, and from Washington. A BBG-commissioned national survey in April, found that nearly one in five Ukrainian adults consumes VOA content weekly (18.3 percent) with VOA reaching almost one in 10 adults in the critical eastern regions.

#### NIGERIA

VOA continues to provide ground-breaking coverage of Nigeria, where 78 percent of its' weekly audience of 16 million say VOA helps form their opinions on important issues. VOA English- and Hausa-language reporters traveled through the heart of the Boko Haram insurgency, providing

multimedia coverage of the abduction of more than 200 school girls and the devastating impact of the movement's reign of terror on the economy, infrastructure and people of northeastern Nigeria.

#### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Responding to the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR), VOA launched two 10-minute daily broadcasts in Sango, the country's lingua franca, on its FM station in the capital, Bangui. VOA French to Africa also broadcasts on the stream, adding local content in five daily news breaks during morning drive hours. VOA French and Sango broadcasts have become vital sources of information for the people of CAR at this critical moment in their history. VOA also increased its stringer presence in the country and sent two reporters on assignment to CAR, where they produced reports amid a very difficult security situation.

#### WEST AFRICA

VOA joined with the BBC in a groundbreaking partnership over the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, sharing TV, radio and digital content in English, French, and Hausa from infected areas of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

#### THAILAND

When the Thai military suspended radio and TV broadcasts in May, VOA Thai

VOA's Ahmad Fawad Lami (right) interviews President Hamid Karzai at the Presidential Palace in Kabul.

launched a daily, live 30-minute satellite radio-on-TV and webcast while ramping up social media outreach on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. During the crisis, Facebook engagement ("likes," shared content, clicks and comments) soared from 2,000 to more than 25,000 unique users per week.

### Supporting Democracy and Countering Extremism



#### AFGHANISTAN

VOA provided extensive coverage of the June presidential runoff election in Afghanistan, including an exclusive interview with outgoing President Hamid Karzai and a series of reports on voters defying Taliban threats to cast their ballots. After negotiating a power-

sharing agreement between the presidential rivals, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry sat down with VOA's Afghan Service for an interview that ran on Dari- and Pashto-language radio as well as on Afghan state television.

#### IRAN

VOA Persian is the leading international broadcaster in Iran with television programs that are watched weekly by 24 percent of the adult population. Daily coverage of talks on Iran's nuclear program included on-the-scene reporting and interviews with chief U.S. negotiator Wendy Sherman and Secretary of State John Kerry. There are documentaries about life in Iran, a

weekly 30-minute entertainment program focusing on the Iranian-American community of Los Angeles, and special reports on interfaith initiatives by U.S. religious communities as part of an effort to fight religious extremism and dispel misconceptions about the United States. VOA Persian partnered with leading U.S. universities including Stanford, Princeton, Harvard, Yale, and UCLA on a multimedia project to highlight those institutions' history, student life, and research on Iran in a series of TV documentaries and on the VOA Persian website.

#### SOMALIA

In Somalia, VOA continues to be a reliable source of information in the troubled Horn of Africa region, where more than half the population (51 percent) listens to VOA weekly. VOA's Nairobi bureau chief was embedded with Somali and African Union troops during operations against al-Shabaab militants and filed compelling reports for VOA television. VOA Somali conducted two town hall meetings this past year -- one in Mogadishu on child soldiers and the other in Hargeisa on human trafficking. VOA Somali's exclusive interview with the father of a Somali teenager who was a stowaway on a California to Hawaii flight was picked up by U.S. and international media, including CNN, ABC and NBC.



The hosts of VOA's *Anba Fo (We'll Say It)*

#### MALI

A year after launching its first Bambara-language radio program for audiences in Mali, the Voice of America has added a dynamic new call-in program, *Anba Fo (We'll Say It)*. The hour-long weekly radio show airs Saturday evenings on VOA's owned-and-operated FM station in Bamako, as well as online. Each episode addresses a topic critical to audiences in Mali, such as security and stability, education, women's rights and youth unemployment. In a micro-poll commissioned by the IBB Office of Research, nearly 90 percent of Mali Kura listeners said the program increased their understanding of current events a "great deal," with one respondent saying, "Hearing the Bambara language from the USA makes me proud."

#### MYANMAR

VOA posted its first full-time Burmese correspondent to Yangon in May and expanded its 30-minute television news program to go live seven days a week with placement on the national channel Sky Net. When Burmese Service Chief Lwin Than interviewed President Thein Sein in November he asked about the need for better media access to

government information. Three weeks later, the Presidential Palace announced the start of weekly press briefings in Naypyitaw.

#### NORTH KOREA

South Korea's TV Chosun says the North Korean Workers' Party newspaper – circulated only among senior party

members – cites VOA Korean reports more than any other foreign news media. VOA Korean pays particular attention to human rights issues and the security threat that North Korea poses to the region as well as Pyongyang's stance on these issues.

### Reaching Key Markets on the Most Effective Platforms

#### TARGETED MIX TO RUSSIA

To counter the Kremlin's influence in Russian-language media, VOA's Russian Service offers a targeted mix of digital and TV programming that provides an accurate portrayal of America, explains its policies and institutions, and addresses distortions and misperceptions about the United States and its policies. The number of Russians who rely on VOA digital sources for alternative viewpoints and engage with VOA's online content continues to grow.

#### VOA HAUSA: OVER FOUR MILLION VISITS PER MONTH ONLINE AND ON MOBILE

During the past year, the VOA Hausa Service has become the most popular service in VOA's digital portfolio, averaging more than four million visits per month. The service has leveraged new products and services to drive this growth, including *Dandalin VOA*, a dynamic 24/7 Hausa language news and information stream designed specifically for mobile devices with youth-oriented music programming, peak-hour news blocks and short, mobile-friendly feature segments.

#### VOA CHINESE INCREASES SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

VOA Mandarin has greatly increased social media accounts inside China, where 75 percent of its audience is below the age of 35. Using QR code links with proxies, VOA has improved access to reports on controversial issues such as official corruption, reports that often rank among the top five on Google News. *History's Mysteries*, a weekly TV documentary series on historical issues too sensitive for open discussion in China, reached more than four million views on YouTube. Meanwhile, VOA Mandarin's English learning programs reached up to three million views each week on social media.

#### VOA KURDISH PROVIDED TARGETED CONTENT ON TV, DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA

With the emergence of the Islamic State and a new government in Baghdad, VOA Kurdish moved aggressively to provide targeted content in Kurdish on television and digital and social media. The VOA Kurdish weekly television program *Kurdish Connection* is now broadcast on affiliate station Naliya TV (NRT), the first non-partisan news channel in Kurdistan. Being on a popular channel in an ideal time slot enables VOA Kurdish to reach many viewers with news and information on U.S.

policies and perspectives on this critical region.

**VOA KHMER POPULAR ON FACEBOOK**  
 VOA Khmer’s Facebook page reached 500,000 fans in March 2014 -- a 10-fold increase in 14 months -- making it the world’s second most popular Khmer-language Facebook page. This rapid increase in fans and high audience engagement comes as Facebook and other social media become increasingly important sources of uncensored news

**Expanding Impact through Partnerships**

**INCREASING AUDIENCE SHARE IN INDONESIA**  
 Indonesian broadcasts reach more than 33 million adults a week, VOA’s single largest audience. Working with eight of Indonesia’s 11 national television networks, more than 20 regional TV stations and hundreds of local radio stations, VOA Indonesian provides in-depth coverage of U.S. policies, world news and Indonesian developments to nearly 20 percent of the country’s adult population. Co-productions with Indonesian national public television TVRI include a focus on Ramadan in America and a look at the unique Indonesian music style Dangdut.

for Cambodians and vital platforms for expressing opinions.

**REACHING SOMALIA ON TV AND ONLINE**  
 The VOA Somali television show *Qubanaha (Variety)*, is seen on satellite, online, and on two Somali affiliates – Universal TV and Somali National Television – which air the show twice a week. *Qubanaha* presents a mix of U.S., international and regional news as well as reports from journalists in Somalia.

**RUSSIAN BUSINESS CHANNEL PARTNERSHIP**  
 Television is the most powerful opinion-shaping medium in Russia, and VOA Russian serves as a U.S. news bureau for stations with a reputation for independent reporting including the Russian Business Channel (RBC). Covering global economics, American business and U.S.-Russia relations, these partnerships have been instrumental for U.S. international media audience growth in Russia as VOA works toward a 60-minute weekly co-production with RBC that would use broadcast facilities and reporting resources in Washington and New York to reach an estimated 11 percent audience share.

VOA Russian on the Russian Business Channel



**RADIO PARTNERING IN PAKISTAN**  
VOA and Pakistan's Radio News Network (RNN) have partnered on an hour-long weekly radio program that focuses on current events and social issues in both countries. *Sada e Jahan* (*Voice of the World*) airs on RNN's FM stations throughout Pakistan, where more than 98 percent of VOA's Pashto audience says VOA programming increases their understanding of current events.

**CIRCUMVENTING NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT BAN**  
Circumventing a Nigerian government ban on international broadcasters, VOA has an exciting new partnership with Channels TV, one of the country's most popular private broadcasters reaching approximately 15 percent of Nigerians over the age of 15. Channels TV news programs have featured VOA correspondents live from the White House, the Pentagon, and the State

Department; from Nairobi, Dakar, and Johannesburg; and from Moscow, Jerusalem, Bangkok, and London. Channels TV also airs produced VOA television packages and video-on-the-scene reports while providing VOA's English to Africa Service breaking news about events in Nigeria, such as Boko Haram violence and presidential campaigning. This dynamic co-production model is an innovative way to gain affiliates and reach audiences in increasingly sophisticated media markets.



BBG Governor Matt Armstrong (left) and John Momoh, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Channels Television

## Providing In-Depth Coverage and Special Programs

**VOA AIDS DOCUMENTARY AIRS**  
Following its world premiere at the 20<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia, the latest VOA documentary, *AIDS: Living in the Shadows*, is being featured on VOA satellite TV streams (in English, Persian and Chinese) as well as on *VOANews.com*. The documentary, introduced by music legend and AIDS activist Elton John, in which AIDS victims in Nigeria, Cambodia, Haiti, Uganda, Canada, and the United States

discuss the stigmas that make them outcasts, even within their own families.

**YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE**  
VOA provided blanket coverage of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Summit in Washington in July in 16 languages across Africa, including a co-production with Nigerian affiliate Channels TV. Programming included interviews with many of the 500 young Africans selected as YALI Fellows as well as a live broadcast of President Obama's welcome speech on satellite and online,

with simultaneous French translation. VOA hosted a 30-minute TV special from Howard University as part of its *Africa 54* program and broadcast a TV special that profiled YALI Fellows from Uganda, Senegal, the DRC, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. VOA Amharic hosted a cyber-hangout town hall discussion with six YALI Fellows from Ethiopia in which questions were solicited via social media. The conversation was broadcast on radio and online, attracting more than 143,000 views on

**FACEBOOK.ANTI-CORRUPTION REPORTING**  
VOA English has launched a major initiative highlighting official corruption and the fight to stop it by good governance groups. Through the production of multi-platform reports, this corruption beat has developed close ties with anti-corruption organizations in Ukraine, China, sub-Saharan Africa,

Iraq and other regions, and has frequent interaction with U.S. policymakers, analysts, and experts involved in solving financial crimes. This reporting promotes democratic development by encouraging stronger civil society elements in emerging nations.

**BRONZE MEDAL FOR VOA TIBETAN FILM**  
The VOA Tibetan film, *Fire In The Land Of Snow: Self-Immolations In Tibet*, won a Bronze Medal for “Coverage of Continuing News Story” in the New York Festival 2014 International Television & Film Awards. The film provides an objective and balanced look at a contentious topic, countering Beijing’s narrative that has fanned extremist views in Tibetan and Chinese communities.



VOA Tibetan broadcasts three hours of television and 42 hours of shortwave radio programming each week, and engages audience on Tibetan and English websites as well as on social media.

## FY 2015 – FY 2016 INITIATIVES

### ANTI-EXTREMISM EFFORTS IN AFRICA

As part of enhanced efforts to counter violent extremism, VOA is expanding radio and television broadcasts to Africa's Sahel region, a hotbed of anti-Western activism, including more programming in local languages. There are new 24/7 FM transmissions from Bamako in French and Bambara as well as reprogrammed FM streams from Abidjan in French and from Bangui in French that includes 18 hourly newscasts and more than four hours of French-language news and analysis.

VOA has reformatted its FM station in Juba to provide more localized content and is working to reprogram FM streams in Bujumbura, Kigali, Djibouti, Ouagadougou, and Dakar. Using Africa Investment funds, VOA is opening new reporting and production centers in Bamako, Niamey, and Mombasa. There are new youth-oriented radio shows in Kiswahili and Hausa, pilot programming for a weekly French-language television magazine show, and a mobile innovation lab in Ghana partnering with universities to provide journalism training in the Sahel. VOA challenges the ideology of extremist groups such as Boko Haram and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb by offering alternate narratives that strengthen democratic institutions, open space for public civic participation and address quality of life concerns that fuel insurgencies.

### COUNTERING KREMLIN PROPAGANDA

In response to the broad need for balanced and objective news and information in Russian to counter Kremlin propaganda, VOA Russian has partnered with RFE/RL to produce a 30-minute daily television news program targeting audiences along Russia's periphery. The program will serve as a cornerstone for future U.S. international digital video and television operations in Russian, addressing audiences not only in the Russian Federation, but also Russian speakers worldwide. BBG plans to partner with local stations to contribute supplementary content and increase its Russian-language programming.

### RESTRUCTURING CENTRAL NEWS & ENGLISH

During the coming year, VOA will move to a "digital first" news room, restructuring the organization and workflow of its Central News and English Divisions with a rapid reaction/rewrite desk feeding the work of VOA reporters directly to the VOA website and story teams helping produce better television, faster. New beats have been established on topics such as corruption and Internet freedom – issues on which VOA audiences want more content. Coverage of U.S. foreign policy and New York business news will receive additional resources as will reporting on American developments in health, technology and higher education – areas where the world looks to the United States for leadership and innovation. Increased coverage will come from Persian, Chinese, Hausa, and other language service reporters as well as from Central News correspondents.

**ENHANCED EFFORTS IN KURDISTAN**

VOA will enhance its television and digital content for Iraqi Kurdistan in FY 2015 to better match content with the platforms preferred by local audiences. Research indicates that the Kurdish population in northern Iraq is predominantly a television audience. VOA has entered into a partnership with the hugely popular NRT TV for broadcast on Sunday evenings of VOA's *Kurd Connection*, with a rebroadcast the following day.

**NEW CONTRACTING MODEL**

VOA relies on contract and other short-term staff to support many of its operations. Contractors account for approximately 35 percent of VOA's workforce and are part of its long-term

staffing model as they provide the flexibility required for an Agency engaged in the production and dissemination of news, including surge broadcasting to respond to world events. Working closely with the IBB, VOA is enacting a new approach to maintain its workforce flexibility. This includes transitioning from use of many direct contracts with individuals to far fewer contracts with firms that provide staffing and management services to support requirements for talent that vary over time. The transition to this new contract model will occur gradually over the next few years to support improved workforce operations and VOA's mission.



VOA's weekly TV show *Kurd Connection*, which airs on NRT-TV in Iraqi Kurdistan

# Spanish Language Grantee

(OFFICE OF CUBA BROADCASTING AND  
VOICE OF AMERICA LATIN AMERICA DIVISION)

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED*
SPANISH LANGUAGE GRANTEE	N/A	N/A	\$30,321
VOA LATIN AMERICAN DIVISION	\$4,100	\$3,800	N/A
OCB	\$27,043	\$27,130	N/A

*\*NOTE: FY 2016 funding includes funds designated for OCB and VOA Latin America (minus Creole), which will join to form the Spanish Language International Media Grantee.*

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

**This FY 2016 Budget request for the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) and Voice of America (VOA) Latin America Division (LatAm) begins the process of establishing a new de-federalized Spanish language international media organization that would merge the two entities (excluding the Creole language service). Under this plan and assuming regular appropriations order, the de-federalization process will be completed in early FY 2017 and the new de-**

**federalized organization will be fully operational by mid FY 2017 and receive a BBG grant. OCB will lead the de-federalization effort. The Radio and TV Martí and *martinoticias.com* brands will be prominent brands in the newly formed entity. BBG will continue its active, in-person engagement with authorizers and appropriators about this proposal. In the meantime, if there are specific or immediate questions, BBG will supply more information.**

## OFFICE OF CUBA BROADCASTING OVERVIEW

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) administers Radio and Television (TV) Martí programs, the *martinoticias.com* website from its headquarters in Miami, Florida and the shortwave transmitting station in Greenville, N.C.

The Martí inform and engage the people of Cuba by providing a reliable and credible source of news and information. The Martí use a mix of media, including shortwave, medium wave, direct-to-home satellite, Internet, flash drives and DVDs to help reach audiences in Cuba. Radio and TV Martí and *martinoticias.com* encourage freedom and democracy in Cuba through programs that focus on news and information that is relevant and pertinent to Cubans' daily lives so they can make informed decisions about their future. Primary areas of coverage include news relating to human rights and dissident movements, the Cuban economy, U.S.-Cuban relations, and international stories, such as elections. The Martí also provide significant coverage of Latin American news to keep Cuban audiences informed of regional developments. The Martí's programming contributes to civil society, the development of democratic institutions in Cuba and freedom of the press.

The Martí's website, *martinoticias.com*, produces multimedia original news stories and streams all radio and TV broadcasts -- 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Social media engagement and the largest -- if not the only -- network of Cuban journalists on the island allow the Martí to respond immediately to breaking news. The site regularly adds up-to-the-minute information on the repression of bloggers, journalists, and political activists in Cuba. The Martí maintain an active interactive social media engagement strategy that includes a YouTube Channel, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. OCB has expanded the number of Internet domain extensions for *martinoticias.com*

## OFFICE OF CUBA BROADCASTING FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Providing High Quality Local Reporting on Topics Important to Cubans**

- OCB Doubles News Reports
- Original Programming Enhanced
- Covering Immigration
- Collaboration with U.S. Coast Guard
- Covering Venezuela
- Award Winning Programming
- Highlighting Cuban's Struggle for Free Press and Free Expression
- Increased News Coverage Based on Audience Interest
- Covering Public Dissent
- Breaking News About Health Crisis

### **Reaching Audiences via Digital and Social Media**

- Growing Web Traffic and Engagement on Social Media
- Reaching Cubans by Email and SMS
- Citizen Reporter Network

### **Utilizing Alternate Distribution Methods to Reach the Island**

- Using Flash Drives & DVDs to Distribute Content

### **Providing Programming About the United States**

- State Department Updates
- NBA Playoff Coverage

## VOA LATIN AMERICA DIVISION FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Providing High Quality Local Reporting on Topics Important to Cubans**

- Coverage of Crisis in Venezuela
- Strong Affiliate Network
- Training Affiliates on Internet Circumventions Techniques

### **Helping Counter Isis Extremism**

- Explaining U.S. Policy on ISIS

### **Providing In-Depth Coverage and Special Programs**

- Covering Immigration Crisis
- VOA AIDS Documentary

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Begin the process of establishing a de-federalized Spanish-language grantee network**

to make it more difficult for the Cuban government to block access to the website.

In combination with *martinoticias.com*, the Martí use anti-censorship tools, such as web-based proxies to reach Internet users in Cuba. These proxy sites enable unobstructed delivery of email messages containing news, information and instructions for circumventing government Internet filters.

Although the U.S. and Cuba have agreed to normalize their diplomatic relations, the island continues to be one of the most politically and geographically

isolated societies in the world, with a highly restrictive political and media environment, lack of democratic institutions or guaranties for human rights. It is not possible for the BBG to conduct nationally representative audience surveys in Cuba due to the highly restrictive political and media environment. However, OCB is able to conduct focus group research with recent immigrants from the island. Given these circumstances, OCB measures performance based on daily interaction with the audience and several impact criteria, including jamming and government responses to OCB news coverage

## VOICE OF AMERICA LATIN AMERICA DIVISION OVERVIEW



VOA Spanish covers U.S. and major news events for a network of affiliates throughout Latin America.

The Voice of America Latin America Division (excluding the Creole Service) provides news and information to

audiences throughout Latin America on TV, radio, and online. The Division's "Washington Bureau Strategy" focuses

on bringing US news and information, business, technology, health, and sports to more than 350 affiliates in the region, including leading media organizations in the Americas.

VOA Latin America engages audiences in discussions about the United States and world events with programming that not only ensures a broad understanding of American values and viewpoints but also enhances respect for the United States as a nation that values truth and fairness.

On television, VOA Latin America delivers U.S. and international news of interest to the region five days a week on *El Mundo al Dia (The World Today)* and presents debate and analysis with newsmakers on the 30-minute newsmagazine *Foro (Forum)*.

On radio, *Buenos Dias America (Good Morning, America)* is VOA's longest-running Spanish-language news show with more than 50 years on the air. Its 30 minutes of national and international news, sports, business, science, entertainment, and weather airs daily at

8:30 am. The Latin America Division also produces the news review program *Estudio 45, Deportivo Internacional (Sports International)* as well as the 30-minute music shows *Top Ten USA* and *Musica Country*.

VOA Latin America's main website [voanoticias.com](http://voanoticias.com) delivers up-to-the-minute news and information, sports, technology, and entertainment along with a new student blog with most users accessing the site on mobile phones. The Division is also active on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube with a combined total of more than 7.5 million page views in 2014. More than one-third of those page views came from inside the United States, more than 16 percent from Mexico, more than seven percent from Venezuela, more than six percent from Spain, and more than six percent from Colombia.

"Partnering with the Voice of America gives us prestige," says the managing editor of Colombia's *El Tiempo.com* Antonio Santos. "The idea is to improve our content and our coverage of the United States."



VOA Spanish's TV program *Foro*.

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS – OFFICE OF CUBA BROADCASTING



TV Marti's *Avanza Cuba*

### **Providing High Quality Local Reporting on Topics Important to Cuban**

#### **OCB DOUBLES NEWS REPORTS**

During the last two years, OCB has doubled the number of news reports it produces on the island, providing audiences with more in-depth local coverage. This is of paramount interest to Cuban audiences. The Marti's have assembled the largest – to our knowledge the only – network of independent journalists working inside Cuba. These journalists send reports (which include audio, text, video and photographs) from across the island via telephone, SMS and Internet. Because of an OFAC license granted in 2012, the Marti's have been able to hire Cuban nationals to work inside Cuba as multimedia journalists and producers, creating a network of reporters working throughout the island exclusively for the Marti's. Their reports are used daily in TV and radio newscasts and are compiled for the monthly TV Marti program, *Desde Adentro – "From Inside" (Cuba)*. The

reports also are presented on *martinoticias.com* and distributed on the island on flash drives and DVDs.

#### **ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING ENHANCED**

The Marti's increased production of original programming, including information and analysis, interviews, documentaries, series, music, and live coverage of news and events, while diversifying content with social, economic, sports and technology reporting.

#### **COVERING IMMIGRATION**

In 2014, a record number of Cubans entered the United States across the Mexican border, showing a growing trend of Cuban citizens traveling to Central and South America and then moving upwards towards the U.S. There was also a record increase in the

immigration of *balseros* (rafters). One of the more dramatic examples was the case of the Cuban rafters rescued in Mexico, where 19 people died in the incident, including a pregnant woman. *Martí Noticias* had around-the-clock coverage, including exclusive videos and pictures of the rafters' last moments seen alive, reactions from family and friends both in Cuba and the U.S., as well as interviews with Mexican authorities dealing with the incident.

Immigration topics are comprehensively covered by all Martí platforms. TV Martí crews traveled to Panama, and the Bahamas following key stories, and through collaborations with local media in Ecuador, México, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, the Martí gathered first-hand testimonies as well as other exclusive material from Central America and Cuba. This material was included in the production of *Cambio de Ruta – Change of Path*, a half hour program that documents the different paths Cubans are taking to illegally reach the U.S. as well as the dangers they are exposed to. Besides the organic news reporting of these events, the Martí also launched an awareness campaign about the dangers of illegal immigration that included radio and TV Public Service Announcements. An information page was created and heavily promoted with several topics of interest to our audience, from the Cuban Adjustment Act, “Pies Secos – Pies Mojados” policy, to Visa application requirements, or the Cuban Medical Professional Parole, the informational page allows visitors a first glance at U.S.-Cuba immigration policies as well as links to relevant sites.

**COLLABORATION WITH U.S. COAST GUARD**  
As an example of our regular collaboration with other U.S. entities, the Martí reached hundreds of thousands of Cubans with a message from the U.S. Coast Guard. A Social Media campaign was launched in Twitter and Facebook from January 9 to January 17, 2015 that included messages from the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as informational news articles about the “Pies secos-Pies mojados” policy and the Cuban Adjustment Act. The messages from the Coast Guard were also sent to 30,000 Cubans via text messages and to 324,347 email addresses on the island on January 9, 2015.



#### COVERING VENEZUELA

In addition to our regular news coverage of the Venezuelan crisis that sparked in April 2014, TV Martí produced a weekly program, *Venezuela en la calle – Venezuela on the Streets*, devoted to covering the events that included extensive coverage of marches, protests and street clashes between the Cuban backed government and the opposition, with interviews from our correspondents on the ground as well as expert analysis from all sides of the political spectrum in our Miami studios.

#### AWARD WINNING PROGRAMMING

In 2014, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting received four Emmy Award nominations by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Suncoast Chapter. One of the programs recognized was *Arte y Disidencia*, a special program with Cuban movie director, Lilo Villaplana, who spoke about the challenges of being a movie director in Cuba and their struggle to have freedom of speech. The Director used Cuban government blockage of Marti as an example of how the Cuban people are denied information on his award winning documentary "*La Muerte del Gato*."

Another nominee was *La Nueva Cuba de Guillermo Fariñas* based on Guillermo Fariñas. The "Sakharov Prize" winner is a renowned dissident, admired and respected for his nonviolent activism. Fariñas, a spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Cuba, has initiated more than a dozen hunger strikes.

#### HIGHLIGHTING CUBAN'S STRUGGLE FOR FREE PRESS AND EXPRESSION

TV Martí's program *En sus Propias Palabras - In Your Own Words*, profiled independent journalist Alberto Mendez Castello and his important role distributing news bulletins around rural Cuba to promote freedom of the press and freedom of expression; as well as the story of the Cuban rapper "El Sexto" and his struggle to perform freely using his critical lyrics.

#### INCREASED NEWS COVERAGE BASED ON AUDIENCE INTEREST

OCB has increased news coverage and analysis based on areas of interest to our audience, such as entrepreneurship, racial discrimination, gender violence, economy, sports, etc. For example:

Several programs were produced at the 24<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the "Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy" on July 31, 2014, which was celebrated in Miami and included participation by economists from Cuba.

Radio Marti aired a special program that focused specifically on the problems faced in Cuba by black *cuentapropistas* (small business owners). The program was recorded entirely inside Cuba for Radio Martí and was hosted by opposition figure Manuel Cuesta Morua. Panelists included independent journalist Ivan Garcia and budding black businessmen Francisco Balido and Jose Seceff.

#### COVERING PUBLIC DISSENT

OCB broke the story of a rare demonstration of public dissent, when dozens of Cuban artisans and vendors protested in the city of Holguín, Cuba, marching to local government offices and demanding the right to work without government harassment. Information, pictures and video shared in social networks was curated by OCB journalists that helped unmask government bloggers who used old photos of the square to make believe that there was no demonstration. Radio Marti got an exclusive interview with the man that filmed the protest who was arrested, threatened, and had his work license revoked. Eventually the story made it to the *New York Times*.

#### BREAKING NEWS ABOUT HEALTH CRISIS

OCB was first to report on the more than 2,000 cases of the infectious viral disease in Cienfuegos that some health experts feared could be the little known African virus threatening the Caribbean

islands. Reports covered the spread of the Chikungunya virus in the Caribbean, and the possible existence of the virus in Cuba. The Cuban government was late to address the public health concerns regarding the Chikungunya virus so, in addition to program coverage, Radio Marti produced and broadcast a public health advisory including suggestions on avoiding contracting the mosquito transmitted virus. Only after more than 300 thousand cases were reported and 28 deaths confirmed in the Caribbean,

the government admitted there was a health alert and confirmed cases on the island. A similar situation happened regarding the Cholera outbreak. A month after Radio Marti broke the story about cases of cholera in Cienfuegos and launched an awareness campaign, authorities finally recognized there were cholera cases. A similar situation also happened with the dengue outbreak which became one of the worst epidemics in the area.

### Reaching Audiences via Digital and Social Media

#### GROWING WEB TRAFFIC AND ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

During fiscal year 2014, OCB's web traffic reached 3,921,079 visits and grew its social media referrals more than 1,000%. Marti Noticias' Facebook reached 2,347,895 people. This is a 230% increase from the previous FY. OCB also saw a solid increase in Facebook engagement of 226%.

#### REACHING CUBANS BY EMAIL AND SMS

The Martís reach out to hundreds of thousands of Cubans each month via email and SMS initiatives, providing news and information that would otherwise not be available to them. Their SMS engagement allows Cubans to send news tips and alerts that the Martís curate and develop into news stories, when appropriate. OCB continues to grow its social media integration across all platforms to enhance its news-gathering and audience engagement around Marti content. Marti Noticias' Facebook account reached 2,347,895 people. This is a 230% increase from the previous

fiscal year. OCB also saw a solid increase in Facebook engagement of 226%.



#### CITIZEN REPORTER NETWORK

In May, OCB launched *Reporta Cuba* to empower Cubans to communicate and engage in new media. *Reporta Cuba* is a network of citizen reporters -- students, independent journalists, activists, dissidents, and regular citizens who share information with OCB via SMS, MMS, email and other media from their mobile phones and computers about what is happening in Cuba. *Reporta Cuba* empowers Cubans to learn to use available tools to disseminate information and report on what they live and experience without censorship or ideological constraints.

## Utilizing Alternate Distribution Methods to Reach the Island



### USING FLASH DRIVES & DVDS TO DISTRIBUTE CONTENT

OCB continues to use alternative means to distribute Martí content across the island. This includes paper and plastic flash drives that are easy to distribute, and difficult to monitor and censor. This cutting-edge technology allows users to store data in plain paper that is mailed to homes and businesses. Content saved on paper flash drives can be read off-line. If users are connected to the Internet, these drives can provide OCB with web traffic and usage metrics.

OCB developed an alternative network for the delivery and distribution of TV Martí programs across Cuba. This network includes 8 copy centers, 18 points of reception, and 85 distribution points on the island. OCB has sent thousands of DVDs and hundreds of flash drives loaded with Martí programs to Cuba. To increase delivery and enable faster turnaround of our content, OCB has initiated digital sharing of programs such as *Antena Live* and *7N30* via ftp as soon as they are recorded.

## Providing Programming about the United States

### STATE DEPARTMENT UPDATES

OCB broadcast a special public service announcement featuring officials from the State Department, who updated audiences on travel policies and legal immigration to the United States.

### NBA PLAYOFF COVERAGE

Radio Martí offered Cuban audiences live, play-by-play coverage of the NBA playoffs and finals this year. This is in addition to its coverage of regular- and post-season Major League Baseball.

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS - VOA LATIN AMERICA DIVISION (EXCLUDING CREOLE SERVICE)

VOA Latin America is where President Obama's speech on Cuba was broadcast with simultaneous translation across a Latin American affiliate network of nearly 30 million people.

It's where that audience saw exclusive interviews with Assistant Secretary of

State for the Western Hemisphere Roberta Jacobson, with the Director of the White House Office of Hispanic Affairs Cecilia Munoz, with the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command General John Kelly, and with the presidents of Peru, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

### Providing High Quality Local Reporting on Topics Important to Latin America

#### COVERAGE OF THE CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

When Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro muzzled national media and cracked down on protestors in February, Venezuelans turned to VOA as a reliable source for accurate and balanced accounts of the turmoil in their country.

The Latin America division provided live coverage from Caracas and from the Venezuelan diaspora as well as from the White House, State Department, and Congress where U.S. officials called on the Maduro government to respect human rights and the rule of law.

Speaking to VOA's reporter in Caracas, Lillian Tintori, the wife of jailed opposition leader Leopoldo López, thanked VOA and spoke of its vital role in keeping Venezuelans informed. Her video interview with VOA was not only seen through affiliate stations from Mexico to the Southern Cone, it had more than 800 reTweets within its first day on voanoticias.com.

Opposition leader Andrés Eloi Briceno, declared from Mérida province that he is a regular follower of the VOA website, adding "I must thank you because you

are a doorway to information. We are going to let everyone know, our friends know, to reach out to your website so that they can get information. I think your information is on-the-spot, timely, and...it is a way for people to be informed about what is happening in our country."



#### STRONG AFFILIATE NETWORK

From ATV in Peru, to Canal 15 in Nicaragua, to TVN in Chile, and Cablenoticias in Colombia, powerful affiliates rely on VOA to fill an important gap in their news and analysis.

"VOA has greatly contributed to our coverage," says José Velázquez, News Director at Ecuador's leading independent TV network,

Teleamazonas, crediting the Latin America Division with “the best journalistic and editorial reputation in the hemisphere.”

#### TRAINING AFFILIATES ON INTERNET CIRCUMVENTION TECHNIQUES

Working to support the free flow of information in Venezuela, VOA Latin

America hosted the managing editors of two of its leading Venezuelan online affiliates -- La Patilla and La Verdad – for a week of training on Internet circumvention techniques.

### Helping Counter ISIS Extremism

#### EXPLAINING U.S. POLICY ON ISIS

Latin Americans care about more than Latin America. VOA brings them Washington’s approach to countering the violence extremism of Islamic State militants.

In packaged reports and live shots for radio and television and with interviews and expert analysis in long format programming, VOA Latin America brought to affiliates VOA’s exclusive interview with Secretary of State John Kerry from Saudi Arabia as he helped build the anti-ISIS coalition.

Reporters went live on stations from Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela with President Obama’s speech about

the ISIS threat. Online and in social media, VOA Latin America provided reaction from Congress and international allies.

Original reporting focused on the US response to ISIS, including Spanish Service interviews with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and Reporters Without Borders. On the ISIS threat, VOA Latin America also brought to its audience interviews with Paulo Botta at the Center of Middle Eastern Studies in Buenos Aires, with former Obama Administration Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Frank Mora, with national security expert U.S. Army Colonel (retired) Eric Rojo, and with Madrid-based Middle East Studies analyst Fernando Bazan.

### Providing In-Depth Coverage and Special Programs

#### COVERING IMMIGRATION CRISIS

Television stations throughout Latin America turned to VOA Spanish Service for coverage of the crisis involving unaccompanied minors from Central America crossing the U.S. border.

“Voice of America’s approach to the news is very balanced, and this allows our station to offer details about what is

happening on the border,” says nightly news presenter Susana Morazan of Azteca Guatemala TV.

With on-the-ground reporting from the border and interviews with administration officials and lawmakers, VOA Latin America helped explain U.S. policy on this national security issue.

“For our station, the information that Voice of America offers from Congress or the White House is important because it enables us to explain what is really happening on the topic of immigration in the United States,” says Mundo TV Honduras Executive Producer Emma Calderon.

VOA worked closely with IBB’s Office of Digital and Design Innovation to produce its first e-book in English. The e-book uses the history of immigration in the United States to illustrate the current debate over immigration – both legal and illegal – with historic photographs, films and audio as well as original multimedia.



“Unsettled: a Story of U.S. Immigration.” Which was released in both Apple and e-pub formats, explores the political and economic implications of immigration using text, archival photos, audio clips, video interviews, interactive maps, charts and graphics.

#### VOA AIDS DOCUMENTARY

Following its world premiere at the 20<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia, the latest VOA documentary, *AIDS: Living in the Shadows*, is being [featured](#) on VOA satellite TV streams (including Spanish) as well as on *VOANews.com*. Four affiliates in Latin America aired the

documentary, introduced by music legend and AIDS activist Elton John, in which AIDS victims in Nigeria, Cambodia, Haiti, Uganda, Canada, and the United States discuss the stigmas that make them outcasts, even within their own families.

#### FY 2015-FY 2016 INITIATIVES

The FY 2016 Budget for the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) and Voice of America (VOA) Latin America Division (LatAm) begins the process of establishing a new de-federalized Spanish language international media organization that would merge the two entities (excluding the Creole language service, which will be merged into the French to Africa language service with which it has better cultural and linguistic ties).

Under this plan and assuming regular appropriations order, the de-federalization process will be completed in early FY 2017 and the new de-federalized organization will be fully operational by mid FY 2017 and receive a BBG grant. OCB will lead the de-federalization effort. The Radio and TV Martí and *martinoticias.com* will be prominent brands in the newly formed entity.

# International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB)

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	<b>\$67,000</b>	<b>\$61,018</b>	<b>\$61,010</b>

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

### This FY 2016 Budget request:

- **proposes expanding mobile application & digital content development capacity to create new products and services for audiences worldwide on current and emerging web, mobile and social platforms.**
- **proposes administrative cuts in several areas to include travel, contractor support, supplies, and representational funds.**

## OVERVIEW

The International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) provides support services to the federal portions of BBG (the Agency), oversight over grantee operations, and transmission and distribution services to all components of BBG. IBB manages the day-to-day implementation of the Board’s strategic vision, while enabling BBG to deliver programs to a diverse global audience. IBB handles programming support, including transmission networks, digital media outreach, marketing and program placement, and a robust Internet anti-censorship program that links network content to audiences in restricted media environments.

IBB is composed of the Office of the Director, General Counsel (OGC), Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), Communications and External Affairs

(COM), Strategy and Development (OSD), Digital & Design Innovation (ODDI), Performance Review (OPR), Contracts (CON), Human Resources (OHR), Civil Rights (OCR), Policy (OP), Security (OS), Office of Workforce Support and Development (OWSD), Office of Research and Assessment (ORA), and Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI)<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> FY 2016 Budget Request for TSI is reflected in a separate section of this document.



Top: ODDI award-winning mobile apps offer live streams and chat features to engage Agency audiences.

These offices are vital to BBG operations and provide the following functions: marketing content to affiliate partners; researching the impact of broadcast content; creating digital media platforms and undertaking other digital media initiatives; providing financial services, e.g., payroll and invoice payment; awarding and administering contracts; supporting personnel; conducting relations with Congress, the media, and other interests; and ensuring physical security.

## FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Promoting Organizational Agility and Cost-Effectiveness**

- New Contracting Staff Strategy
- Acquisitions Policy Review
- Procurement Process Review
- Reworking Payroll and Time & Attendance Workflows
- Established the Office of Workforce Support and Development

### **Targeting Key Markets on the Most Effective Platforms**

- Successful U.S. Bureau Affiliate Strategy
- News Delivery and Engagement through Mobile Apps
- Increasing Content Delivery through Digital Platform for Affiliates

### **Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crisis and Unrest**

- Ukraine & Russia
- Central African Republic
- Coordinated Response to ISIL
- Keeping Congress and the Public Informed

### **Supporting Democracy and Countering Extremism**

- Journalist Training
- Expanding Reach in Sahel

### **Measuring and Reporting on Performance**

- New Impact Model
- Audience Research
- Comprehensive Analytics Platform
- Evaluating BBG Programming

### **Leveraging and Harmonizing BBG Assets and Brands**

- Cross Entity Performance Reviews
- Interagency Collaboration

### **Enhancing Employee Engagement, Development and Productivity**

- Mentoring Program
- New SES Appraisal System
- Voluntary Early Retirement Increases Opportunities for Updating Workforce Skills

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Digital Innovations**

#### **New SES Appraisal System**

#### **Cloud Based 5-Tier Performance System**

#### **Expansion of U.S. Bureau Affiliate Strategy**

#### **Expanded Non-BBG Journalist Training**

#### **Digital Services for Affiliates**

#### **Workplace Engagement Action Plan**

#### **Establish a Standardized Review Criteria for Measuring Performance Across Networks**

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Promoting Organizational Agility and Cost-Effectiveness



The IBB contracting office in collaboration with VOA consolidated contracting for personnel from hundreds of individual contracts to one, greatly reducing the administrative burden on the agency.

#### NEW CONTRACTING STAFF STRATEGY

IBB is leading a comprehensive reform of Agency acquisitions. In collaboration with VOA, the IBB Director's Office and Contracting (CON) issued a solicitation that creates a new structure for acquiring contractor personnel to support VOA and OCB programming. This new structure streamlines the administration of these contracts and significantly reduces the administrative burden for a significant portion of the Agency's workforce.

#### ACQUISITIONS POLICY REVIEW

Additionally, CON began a systematic review of Agency acquisitions policies, including policies on competition, contractor performance information, contracting officer representative (COR) training, and contracting officer (CO) training.

#### PROCUREMENT PROCESS REVIEW

OCFO, in close collaboration with TSI, CON and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), undertook the review and mapping out of the Agency's procurement processes that will culminate in the creation of an end-to-end "Procure-to-Pay" workflow closely integrating these three offices and streamlining procurement actions.

#### REWORKING PAYROLL AND TIME & ATTENDANCE WORKFLOWS

Working closely with the OHR, the OCFO also performed a complete analysis of the Payroll and Time & Attendance processes leading to the complete automation and integration of these tasks with the Financial System (Momentum) and the subsequent drastic diminution of wasteful, paper based processes that are error prone and consume an inordinate amount of resources in their execution.

### ESTABLISHED THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (OWSD)

In FY 2014, the IBB created OWSD. Designed to bring into one umbrella and one brand all of the training and enrichment activities designed to improve the skillset of the workforce as well as its well-being, OWSD began its

activities in the fourth quarter of FY2014 and is currently implementing a cloud-based Learning Management System that will enable the creating of Personal Training Records, creation of Certificate Programs and Curricula design to promote continuous staff education and increase opportunities for career growth and cross-training.

### Targeting Key Markets on the Most Effective Platforms



VOA reporter provides analysis in a stand up from the U.S. State Department on Channels TV in Nigeria.

### SUCCESSFUL U.S. BUREAU AFFILIATE STRATEGY

The Office of Strategy and Development (OSD) has established a successful “U.S. Bureau” affiliate strategy. Based on placing interactive reports on local affiliates, this strategy has been tremendously successful in Latin America, where it led to audience growth of around 20 million people. BBG networks are expanding this concept by partnering with affiliates in newsgathering as well as capitalizing on other learning and exchange opportunities. These interactive relationships benefit the Agency and its affiliates. Affiliates receive high-quality

content from BBG networks, along with the credibility that a relationship with the Agency’s networks brings to their broadcasts. Meanwhile, BBG networks gain access to new audiences and opportunities to work with and train local broadcasters and even to use local affiliate-generated content. For example, Channels TV in Nigeria regularly airs VOA content in prime time. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, VOA and TopCongo Radio have formed a partnership that includes exchanging reporters to work on stories and learn from one another.

### NEWS DELIVERY AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH MOBILE APPS

The Office of Digital & Design Innovation (ODDI) mobile team, in partnership with MBN digital, released a new mobile application for Radio Sawa in June on the Apple iTunes and Google Play stores. The Sawa app offers seven custom, continuous audio streams in Arabic, on-demand episodes of Sawa’s most popular programs, easy access to the hourly newscast, and the interactive Sawa Chat feature that allows listeners to respond to questions on relevant community issues directly through the mobile application.



Affiliates can download video and audio news reports from all the BBG networks through BBG's Direct digital syndication platform.

#### INCREASING CONTENT DELIVERY THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR AFFILIATES

The ODDI digital services team worked closely with the OSD marketing team to develop a new platform for BBG's global affiliates and digital partners. The new BBG Direct features video and audio content from all five broadcast entities, and provides affiliates a streamlined and cost-effective way to receive broadcast-quality BBG programming to distribute on-air and online to local audiences. Along with full-length and short-form

broadcast programs, the BBG Direct platform offers digital partners access to custom content feeds that can be published to a variety of digital platforms and embeddable players for live audio streams. It also provides BBG with marketing ability to promote special programs, more effectively communicate programming changes, and distribute satellite and program guide information to help keep affiliates informed and engaged with BBG program offerings.

## Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crisis and Unrest



In May, VOA Ukrainian launched *Studio Washington*, a daily Russian-language television newscast aimed at countering pro-Kremlin disinformation.

### UKRAINE & RUSSIA

OSD has worked closely with VOA and RFE/RL to provide essential news and information to audiences in Ukraine, Russia, and countries that border Russia in the wake of the crisis in Ukraine. OSD's years-long effort to build a strong network of local affiliates in Ukraine paid huge dividends during the crisis, when audiences doubled to more than 20 percent weekly – seven million people. After Moscow's invasion of Crimea, OSD-Prague, in coordination with BBG networks, placed new programs in Russian and Ukrainian on the National TV Company's domestic and satellite channels, as well as nationwide networks News 24 and ICTV. Strong audience interest in local, European and American perspectives on the crisis meant that RFE/RL and VOA played important roles during this crucial period in Ukraine's history. OSD has worked closely with the broadcasters on a plan to expand Russian-language television targeting the Russian periphery.

### CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC

In response to the crisis in the Central African Republic, VOA provided public service announcements (PSA) on humanitarian and health issues and conflict resolution for BBG's owned-and-operated FM station in the capital, Bangui. By the end of May 2014, 39 PSAs had been completed. In February 2014, the Office of Policy was tasked with providing PSAs for VOA surge broadcasting to South Sudan in response to the crisis there. By August 2014, the office had produced nine PSAs for use in VOA English to Africa's special programming to South Sudan. ODDI contributed to the crisis response efforts through its coordinated mobile messaging campaign that delivered short-form audio and Short Message Service (SMS) news alerts & PSAs from VOA to more than 2500 individual mobile subscribers in the region.

### COORDINATED RESPONSE TO ISIL

The rise of ISIL, most notably its moves into Iraq as Syria continued to descend into war and chaos, prompted OSD to develop and execute a crisis plan by working closely with MBN and VOA. OSD's role was to create a unified, collaborative effort in Iraq and the region and then work through the interagency process to integrate that work into the U.S. Government's official response.

### KEEPING CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC INFORMED

Through briefings, formal reports, supporting materials, and social media outreach, the Office of Communications and External Affairs kept the U.S.

Congress and the public apprised of BBG's work on several key American foreign policy matters, including countering Russian misinformation in Ukraine and the surrounding region, providing unbiased news for people in

countries facing upheaval, e.g., Venezuela and the Central African Republic, and advancing freedom in closed societies such as Iran, Cuba, and North Korea.

## Supporting Democracy and Countering Extremism

### JOURNALIST TRAINING

OSD has strengthened the U.S.'s ability to support a free and open press, and the sustainability of key civil society actors, by improving capacity of our media partners around the world. Through journalism and media business training the BBG has created a positive brand and relationship with hundreds of journalists in countries, including South Sudan, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Burundi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda, South Africa, Indonesia, Jamaica, and Bangladesh. Training topics have included political reporting, journalism ethics, best practices in journalism, health, education, entrepreneurship, the environment, and use of new technologies. OSD worked with reporters, editors, and news managers to encourage professionalism and understanding of the role of the media in a democracy.



*South Sudan In Focus* host John Tanza trains journalists in South Sudan.



A Radio Sawa reporter interviews a listener at the launch of a new Agency FM station in Mauritania.

### EXPANDING REACH IN SAHEL REGION

Working with TSI and VOA, OSD continued to increase distribution capacity in Africa's volatile Sahel region. Since 2011, BBG has installed FM transmitters in Bangui, Central African Republic; Bamako, Mali; Juba, South Sudan; N'Djamena, Chad; Nouakchott, Mauritania; Dakar, Senegal; and Bujumbura, Burundi. These stations -- programmed with news, information, and music targeting a young audience vulnerable to extremist recruitment -- expand reach and impact beyond what can be achieved through placement of selected programming with local

affiliates. Perhaps more importantly, Agency owned-and-operated FMs are a proven means of staying on the air during civil unrest. This year, when the Central African Republic devolved into

chaos and virtually every radio station in Bangui closed, VOA remained on the air via an FM transmitter that was secure on U.S. Embassy grounds.

## Measuring and Reporting on Performance

### NEW IMPACT MODEL

OSD rolled out a new BBG Impact Model that uses a variety of indicators to capture and quantify the impact of BBG broadcasts in target markets. Because impact involves more than the number of people BBG broadcasters reach, the model includes a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The impact framework is derived from the BBG mission statement and examines impact in three categories: inform, engage/connect, and enable change. Indicators measure how BBG broadcasts impact people, local media, and institutions in short-, medium-, and long-term.

### AUDIENCE RESEARCH

The Office of Research & Assessment (ORA) worked with Research Directors from each BBG network to design and commission approximately 40 audience research studies to include a timely crisis survey of Ukraine, which was valued within BBG and by other U.S. Government agencies. The office invested heavily in the design of innovative research methods, such as mobile and online surveys, with the goal of providing timely data to stakeholders. ORA also planned and commissioned an audience panel project that will feed into the BBG's new Impact Model at regular intervals.

### COMPREHENSIVE ANALYTICS PLATFORM

The ODDI audience insights team, now a part of ORA, worked closely with RFE/RL Digital, IBB Research, and Agency broadcast networks to deliver a comprehensive analytics platform for BBG digital properties. This created a common suite of tools and services to measure performance for all five entities on websites, mobile sites, and localized mobile applications. This will allow BBG to determine effectiveness on digital platforms and make more informed decisions on strategic investment in FY 2015 and beyond.

### EVALUATING BBG PROGRAMMING

OPR conducted more than 20 in-depth and impartial qualitative analyses of U.S. international media services as well as 80 spot-checks. These analyses and spot-checks support the Board's mandated responsibility to review and evaluate the mission, operation, and effectiveness of BBG's broadcasting activities as provided by subsection 305(a) of the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994.

OPR also established contracts with three leading translation companies to facilitate ongoing, centralized evaluation, and oversight of the Agency's foreign language products on request of the BBG.

## **Leveraging and Harmonizing BBG Assets and Brands**

### **CROSS ENTITY PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

OPR began conducting joint reviews of the Agency and its Grantees serving the same territory. These joint reviews focused on specific opportunities for the Agency and Grantees to incorporate coverage and cross-promotion, as well as ways to avoid overlap in resources and assignments. OPR analysts also participated in BBG organizational "harmonization" projects in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Iran.

### **INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION**

Throughout FY 2014, the Office of Communications and External Affairs

promoted interagency collaboration through increased contact with mid- and high-level officials at the Department of State. This included forming and implementing an agreement with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to ensure that a U.S. international media component is part of every FSI class for public diplomacy officers, stepping up regionally-targeted Agency briefings for participants in the International Visitor Leadership Program, taking part in the Global Diaspora Forum, and increasing engagement with Pearson Fellows.

## **Enhancing Productivity**

### **VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT INCREASES OPPORTUNITIES FOR UPDATING WORKFORCE SKILLS**

OHR also obtained renewed authority from OPM for Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP).

These authorities are intended to assist the Agency in updating the skills of its workforce and responding to possible reductions. The Agency offered three VSIP opportunities.

## FY 2015 – FY 2016 INITIATIVES

Under the leadership of a revitalized Board of Governors, creating the position of a CEO has been a key BBG objective. The search for a new CEO is ongoing, however it is imperative that the Congress enacts the proposed language to establish a CEO in statute and properly and legally delegate the day-to-day operational responsibilities of the Board to the CEO. Under the proposed CEO legislation, the Board of Governors will fulfill the important visionary, long-term strategy, and journalistic firewall role while the CEO will conduct the day-to-day aspects of running the Agency including personnel management, budget, and congressional outreach..

The IBB supports three new initiatives in the FY 2015 BBG Operating Plan: Providing Digital Media for Next Generation Audiences, Engaging Current and Future Generations in Africa, and Growing Engagement in East and Southeast Asia.

- In the Digital Media initiative, ODDI will expand mobile development capacity to create new smartphone and low-bandwidth applications and support content teams across USIM to take advantage of video and social channels; ORA will improve research into mobile and social media audiences.
- In the Africa investment, OSD will utilize funding for new affiliates; ORA will use funding for research; and ODDI will develop mobile applications.

- In the East and Southeast Asia initiative, OSD will use funds to generate new affiliates.

In FY 2015, OSD is planning a coordinated training effort for high-value affiliates around the world. These training sessions will focus on sales, marketing, and broadcast management, and are planned to reach target regions in which BBG networks are actively trying to build audiences. The target regions include, but are not limited to, Burma, Nigeria, Eastern Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, and parts of Latin America. The BBG will also continue its program to train international journalists on how to cover topics such as health, conservation, climate change, countering violent extremism (CVE), entrepreneurship, elections, and gender. These trainings are supported by Inter Agency Agreements (IAA) with DOS, USAID, and CDC. Training, funded by BBG appropriated funds and IAAs, is frequently organized and carried out by BBG journalists, editors, and support staff. In FY 2016, BBG will continue its training program while seeking out no-cost partnerships with training institutions in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern and Central Europe.

#### DIGITAL INNOVATIONS

ODDI will continue investments started in FY 2014 in four strategic areas:

- designing and developing mobile products and services for connecting audiences;
- providing digital audience insights through user experience testing and platform-specific analytics that measure key performance metrics; and
- developing digital content strategies and co-creating content with BBG entities for emerging digital platforms.

Investment funding will be used to hire contract staff, and provide digital services and training to support these efforts in ODDI in collaboration with the broadcast networks, language services and other IBB elements.



#### OFFICE OF RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT

The IBB created ORA to improve the planning and implementation of research activities across the whole of the Agency. The Office was created by combining three disparate research functions within the IBB: research within OPR; research grant

management within OSD; and digital analytics and analysis within the ODDI. The new ORA office has improved the efficiency, control, and focus of the Agency's research efforts across all platforms, resulting in a stronger research product.

#### NEW SES APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) will continue work on establishing an SES Appraisal System based on regulations established by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The new system is designed to provide a more consistent and uniform framework for communicating expectations and evaluating the performance of SES members. The system will provide a means of establishing and communicating specific individual expectations based on BBG's mission and goals and serve as an instrument for conducting accurate, objective and fair evaluations of executives' performance, which serve as a basis for decisions on executives' pay, awards, and other actions.

#### CLOUD BASED 5-TIER EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

In the third quarter of FY 2015, OHR will launch a cloud based 5-Tier Employee Performance System that will automate the creation, maintenance, routing and approval of employee performance reviews and will seamlessly integrate with the federal system that administer the SF-50 documents that follow federal employees throughout their career.

**EXPANSION OF U.S. BUREAU  
AFFILIATE STRATEGY**

OSD will continue efforts to expand the “U.S. Bureau” and global news concepts. VOA journalists in Washington and global hotspots act as “bureau” reporters for international broadcast organizations, providing live coverage of breaking news and other events.



**EXPANDED NON-BBG  
JOURNALIST TRAINING**

IBB will continue to organize a program for BBG’s entities to train non-BBG journalists overseas and expand this program in FY 2016 with a consistent and sustained direct appropriated BBG investment of \$2 million. In the past, these activities were funded through interagency transfers. Those interagency agreements will continue to support this expanded journalist training activity.

**DIGITAL SERVICES FOR AFFILIATES**

ODDI, in collaboration with OSD, will launch a new range of technical services to traditional broadcast and a new influx of digital affiliates. This will utilize the Agency’s innovation and enterprise infrastructure to assist affiliates in building digital audiences that will expand the distribution of Agency content on new local channels.

**WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT  
ACTION PLAN**

IBB will continue to implement the workplace engagement action plan, addressing challenges identified in the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. Using data from the FY 2013 survey and results expected in September for the FY 2014 survey, IBB leaders will ensure that action items align with survey results, and regularly gauge their effectiveness.

**ESTABLISH A STANDARDIZED REVIEW  
CRITERIA FOR MEASURING PERFORMANCE  
ACROSS NETWORKS**

OPR will build on its efforts to facilitate collaboration and cross-promotion among network services that provide complementary content to the same target areas, to maximize distribution and consumption of key products. In collaboration with ORA, OPR will work with the BBG networks’ Research Directors to establish standardized review criteria for measuring qualitative performance across U.S. International Media, to better inform decisions made by the Board.

# Office of Technology, Services, & Innovation (TSI)

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	<b>\$187,818</b>	<b>\$185,109</b>	<b>\$178,586</b>

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

**This FY 2016 Budget request:**

- proposes investments in TSI to continue shortwave realignment and increase satellite capacity to accommodate HDTV, and
- proposes shortwave transmission cuts, contractor reductions and elimination of government staff (seven FTEs).



## OVERVIEW

IBB’s Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI) oversees and manages a broad array of technical and infrastructure functions, including delivering program content for all BBG networks, and providing information

technology support to many offices throughout the Agency. TSI strives to distribute BBG content in the most cost-effective and efficient way possible. It manages more than 90 transmitting sites worldwide that deliver shortwave,

medium wave, FM, and TV broadcasts. TSI also leases broadcast time at 12 transmitting sites in 11 countries.

In addition to traditional radio and television transmissions, TSI maintains, operates and supports multiple delivery platforms that include a global satellite network, growing capacity to distribute content via cloud based fiber optic networks, Internet capability and mobile devices – all of which are intended to seize opportunities for delivering programming, engage audiences, and countering jamming. Satellite TV and radio are among the most cost-effective ways to reach many millions of dish owners in China and elsewhere at a fraction of the cost of shortwave or medium wave broadcasting. To assess the technical effectiveness of radio and Internet transmissions at distant stations, TSI uses satellite and Internet-based monitoring systems that provide more than 50,000 observations of BBG broadcasts weekly.

Through the Network Control Center (NCC), the Agency's 24/7 operations hub and central distribution point for all BBG transmission systems, TSI manages the flow of content from Agency broadcasters to their audiences. TSI schedules and switches hundreds of separate program streams for distribution via satellite and fiber platforms. NCC also connects broadcast content to digital, cloud-based streaming platforms, allowing for live streams, podcasts, and on-demand video and audio on BBG websites and mobile devices.

TSI oversees the Agency's virtual and physical infrastructure. Information technology, cybersecurity, telecommunications, onsite facility management in Washington, D.C. and continuity of BBG broadcast operations are critical TSI responsibilities. TSI maintains multiple layers of security for the BBG's information systems and improves the Agency's overall cybersecurity posture.

TSI works with BBG networks to provide program production and technical support for innovative delivery formats such as podcasts, text messages and online chats. In keeping with BBG's strategic plan, TSI is moving the Agency from traditional broadcasting (e.g., shortwave in regions where the medium no longer is a critical platform) to less expensive digital delivery systems that are growing in effectiveness, e.g., satellite and Internet radio, mobile phone technologies and social media.

## FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Expanding and Upgrading the Agency's Content Production and Distribution System**

- Expansion of FM Transmitters in Africa
- Restored FM Affiliates in Haiti
- Migration to Digital MPLS Circuits
- Dalet Hardware and Software Update and Data Migration
- Broadcast Logs Application
- Automated Program Streams for FM Stations
- Major Maintenance and Repair Projects on Transmitting Stations

### **Modernizing Information Technology and Communication Tools**

- SharePoint System Migration
- Enhancements to MPLS network
- Upgrade IT Infrastructure to Support Video Editing and Distribution
- Deployed Customer Relationship Management Database to Support Service to Affiliate Network

### **Countering Internet Censorship and Jamming of Broadcast Signals**

- Online Censorship
- Combating Satellite Jamming
- IP-Based Blocking

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Expanding DaletPlus System**

### **Increase Direct-to-Home Satellite Distribution**

### **Digital Archive System**

### **Expansion of FY 2014 Internet Anti-Censorship Programs Across All Platforms**

### **Counter Jamming of BBG Broadcasts**

### **BBG's Global MPLS System**

### **Execute an Effective Shortwave Strategy Based on Audience Media Use Habits**

### **Telecommunications Migration Initiative**

### **Satellite Radio in China**

### **Virtual Desktop Interface**

### **Consolidating and Modernizing Workspace**

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Expanding and Upgrading the Agency's Content Production and Distribution System



TSI technicians install FM transmitters throughout Africa.

#### EXPANSION OF FM TRANSMITTERS IN AFRICA

TSI continues to expand BBG's broadcast reach by installing FM transmitters in strategically important locations in Africa. In 2014, local audiences began hearing Radio Sawa broadcasts from a new FM facility in Nouakchott, Mauritania. A new FM in Dakar, Senegal, came on air in December 2014, and efforts to install FMs in Gao and Timbuktu, Mali are underway. BBG upgraded the FM tower and antenna in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and replaced the FM transmitter and infrastructure in Ajloun, Jordan. TSI has made extensive progress on installing an FM in Bujumbura, Burundi, with an expected on-air date of January 2015.

#### RESTORED FM AFFILIATES IN HAITI

TSI engineers also completed a project to restore and upgrade 14 VOA FM affiliates in Haiti. These facilities were devastated by the earthquake that struck the country in 2010.

#### MIGRATION TO DIGITAL MPLS CIRCUITS

As part of a major effort to reduce telecommunications costs and move toward a more agile and advanced global delivery data network, TSI completed the first phase of the Agency migration from expensive, dedicated transoceanic satellite and fiber circuits to more flexible and less expensive digital Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) circuits. In FY 2014, TSI connected two major BBG distribution hubs in the Philippines and Germany to the Agency's global MPLS network.

#### DALET HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE UPDATE AND DATA MIGRATION

In FY 2013, TSI's IT Directorate completed a hardware and software update, and data migration for the Dalet Radio Suite HD radio production system. In FY 2014, TSI migrated another 20 percent of VOA's content producers to the system, enabling half of VOA's producers access to the new technology, while building gateways to ensure data integrity between the new and old systems.

#### BROADCAST LOGS APPLICATION

TSI's IT Directorate completed development and launched the Broadcast Logs application to capture information and metadata directly from

Dalet Plus and Radio Suite rundowns to minimize the manual reentry of program and usage information. The system allows managers to glean more information about VOA programming, lessens the burden on producers to fill in information about programs and segments, and provides a mechanism for tracking usage rights information in keeping with the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act. TSI began assisting language services in making the transition to this application in FY 2014 and will continue to provide assistance in FY 2015.



VOA's *Dandalin* program is a dynamic 24/7 mobile phone stream, which features a fresh mix of Nigerian and American music, with the latest news, sports and entertainment updates.

#### **AUTOMATED PROGRAM STREAMS FOR FM STATIONS**

To further broaden the Agency's reach in Africa, TSI, in collaboration with VOA, launched two automated program streams using an advanced music software scheduling system. The VOA Hausa automation stream provides a 24/7 mobile feed for the Service's Dandalin program. The VOA South

Sudan stream is a 24/7 English FM feed that targets South Sudan from the Juba FM facility.

With a focus on news and information related to the Ebola virus, in November 2014, TSI, again in collaboration with VOA, began a new English programming stream carrying 10-minute Ebola updates several times a day. The audio stream is broadcast 24/7 on FM stations in Monrovia, Liberia, and Freetown, Sierra Leone, two cities hard hit by the deadly virus.

#### **MAJOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROJECTS ON TRANSMITTING STATIONS**

TSI also accomplished some major maintenance and repair (M&R) work at some of the IBB's overseas transmitting stations. Work on one of the five severely damaged curtain antennas at the Sri Lanka Transmitting Station was completed in FY 2014 which allowed the antenna to be returned to service. The second and final phase of the roof installation work in Sao Tome was completed in September 2014, and the tower painting work in Cyprus was completed in early October 2014. These accomplishments address critical M&R needs to ensure a reliable network for delivering BBG programming to intended audiences worldwide.

## **Modernizing Information Technology and Communication Tools**

### **SHAREPOINT SYSTEM MIGRATION**

TSI launched a beta release of the BBG's redesigned Intranet on the SharePoint Online platform on October 1, 2014. TSI continues to migrate content to this environment while designing new portals to enable Agency elements to organize, collaborate, and share material. BBG's new Intranet on SharePoint Online, a part of Microsoft's Office 365 cloud-based offering, provides users access to Microsoft's online office web applications and features robust collaboration tools to increase efficiencies and improve internal workflows.

### **ENHANCEMENTS TO MPLS NETWORK**

TSI's Global Networks Division continued to build on the Agency's global MPLS network by adding bandwidth for the two Washington, D.C., MPLS circuits and by completing circuit installation for BBG transmitting facilities in Lampertheim, Germany and Tinang, Philippines. In addition, TSI upgraded Internet connectivity at all of VOA's news bureaus in Washington, D.C.: the White House, State Department, Pentagon, and Capitol Hill. As part of the Agency's project to consolidate and modernize workspace in the Cohen Building headquarters, TSI tested and deployed next generation Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone handsets for the first phase of the Agency's open-space design project on the fourth floor of the Cohen Building. TSI also tested and installed a soft-client application that permits Agency users to make telephone calls from their desktop computers.

### **UPGRADE IT NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT VIDEO EDITING AND DISTRIBUTION**

TSI continued to upgrade BBG's IT network infrastructure in its Washington headquarters. This multiyear project will provide a ten-fold increase in bandwidth to enable users to edit and distribute video internally and externally. Accomplishing this goal involves replacing end-user computers, network routers and associated cabling between user workstations and network infrastructure access points. The project is about 60 percent complete. In addition, TSI nearly doubled the extra storage needed to expand high definition television by replacing the primary platform used by the video content management and distribution system and by upgrading production-related storage systems. TSI also continued to upgrade security enhancements to identify system and application vulnerabilities and safeguard the Agency's network.

### **DEPLOYED CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT DATABASE TO SUPPORT SERVICES TO AFFILIATE NETWORK**

TSI continued to provide additional technical and administrative support to BBG's Office of Strategy and Development (OSD) to enhance the organization's marketing capabilities by deploying Microsoft CRM Dynamics Online, a part of Microsoft Office 365. The customized application deployed on this CRM platform has enabled OSD to better manage critical affiliate and contract-related information.

## Countering Internet Censorship and Jamming of Broadcast Signals

### ONLINE CENSORSHIP

In FY 2014, the Internet Anti-Censorship (IAC) team countered online censorship in 13 countries and supported 21 BBG language services. The team expanded use of a mobile application for Android devices that incorporates a social news reader, social reporter to accept user-generated content, and real-time chat functionality targeted at users in Iran. TSI plans to include application modules for the Agency's Russian and Ukrainian language services.



### COMBATING SATELLITE JAMMING

For several years, BBG has been at the forefront of the battle against satellite jamming, working closely with other international broadcasters, the Department of State, non-governmental organizations, satellite operators, and industry groups. BBG participation in public forums and meetings, including sessions of the World Broadcasting

Union, focused global attention on the threat of jamming. As part of the official U.S. delegation to the World Radio Communication Conference, BBG successfully lobbied for a proposal calling on member states to "take the necessary steps" to end jamming. BBG and other broadcasters also pressed the International Telecommunication Union for standards in geolocating the sources of harmful interference. In addition, BBG worked closely with EUTELSAT, the Agency's primary satellite carrier for reaching Iranian audiences, to make jamming by the Tehran government more difficult. Sanctions enacted by the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration affected Iranian broadcasting, resulting in the removal of the country's external TV service, Press TV, from many of the world's satellites, in part because of the regime's jamming.

### IP-BASED BLOCKING

In response to increased IP-based blocking (i.e., Internet-based connectivity) by Iran, the IAC team worked closely with vendors to identify and coordinate solutions to counter the wide-ranging IP blocks put in place. The initial blocking cut in-country use by about 60 percent within 24 hours. The team, in coordination with external sources, was able to restore availability to a majority of the affected audience within two weeks.

## FY 2015-2016 INITIATIVES

### EXPANDING DALETPLUS SYSTEM

TSI will continue expanding the DaletPlus system in FY 2015 and FY 2016 providing VOA with full access to online archives to enable the system to handle high definition (HD) content and to archive all VOA television programming. Moving from standard definition to HD enables BBG to remain competitive by attracting and maintaining audiences and affiliates as they migrate to HD and as direct-to-home satellite providers and users deploy new HD equipment. To accomplish this BBG is upgrading components of its program production and delivery systems. BBG began the process in FY 2013 and FY 2014 by upgrading satellite facilities and upgrade outdated audio production systems. Fifty percent of VOA content producers are able to use the new system. Full migration to all VOA content users will be completed by the end of FY 2015. Dalet Radio Suite HD will allow for tighter integration of audio and video production systems, and audio and video assets will be archived in one system. To provide automated quality control checks on media processed by Dalet, TSI is evaluating software that can work with Dalet Plus to detect impairments before they occur to ensure high quality broadcasts.

### INCREASE DIRECT-TO-HOME SATELLITE DISTRIBUTION

To further strengthen high definition video feeds begun in FY 2014, TSI will increase leased capacity on regional satellites to add HD television channels for three BBG regions. This effort supports the BBG's strategy to deliver content to as many users as possible

and increase direct-to-home satellite distribution of video and audio content. This important investment will expand BBG audiences by using the most widely watched regional, direct-to-home satellites.

### DIGITAL ARCHIVE SYSTEM

To further strengthen high definition video feeds begun in FY 2014, TSI will increase leased capacity on regional satellites to add HD television channels for three BBG regions. This effort supports the BBG's strategy to deliver content to as many users as possible and increase direct-to-home satellite distribution of video and audio content. This important investment will expand BBG audiences by using the most widely watched regional, direct-to-home satellites.



### EXPANSION OF FY 2014 INTERNET ANTI-CENSORSHIP PROGRAMS ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS

In FY 2015, BBG's IAC team plans to expand its successful FY 2014 programs across all platforms – desktop computers, mobile devices and satellite. Efforts will continue in FY 2015 to

provide web-based proxies and client software tools to circumvent foreign Internet censorship. With additional multi-year funding provided in FY 2014, the IAC team has investigated and evaluated proposals of several potential censorship circumvention projects and plans to execute the most promising technologies in FY 2015. The budget request also will provide funding to enable BBG to purchase more bandwidth to reach larger audiences in regions where news is censored.

#### **COUNTER JAMMING OF BBG BROADCASTS**

To counter the ongoing threat of intentional interference (i.e., jamming) of its broadcasts, BBG will remain diligent in pursuing regulatory, technical, political, and public communication avenues to address the issue.

#### **BBG'S GLOBAL MPLS SYSTEM**

TSI will expand and leverage the BBG global MPLS system in FY 2015 by making it more accessible to all Agency networks. After all major circuits have been brought online, BBG will be able to improve file and content sharing. TSI will expand the bandwidth of the MPLS circuits in Washington headquarters to support the separation of mission-critical broadcast content distribution and non-broadcast data network segments.

#### **EXECUTE A EFFECTIVE SHORTWAVE STRATEGY BASED ON AUDIENCE MEDIA HABITS**

Using research on audience media habits, TSI will continue to move away from less effective legacy shortwave and medium wave transmissions toward other technologies, where appropriate, to reach larger and younger audiences. Where shortwave remains important,

TSI is building a more cost-effective transmission infrastructure to support broadcast requirements. Of particular note are efforts at the Kuwait Transmitting Station. Because of the station's strategic importance and low operating costs, TSI is installing a new shortwave antenna that is expected to be operational in FY 2015 and will expand the station's transmitter building in FY 2016 to accommodate future transmitter build-outs.

#### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS MIGRATION INITIATIVE**

TSI is pursuing a telecommunications migration initiative to move the primary means of communication at transmitting stations away from satellite distribution to local Internet providers and terrestrial circuits. The first phase, which involved migrating administrative services such as telephone, satellite monitoring and control, and email, has been completed at the Kuwait Transmitting Station and is expected to be completed at the remaining transmitting stations by the end of FY 2015. The second phase, which migrates point-to-point content delivery to the stations from satellite distribution to MPLS, is projected for completion for most of IBB's program feeds by the end of FY 2016.



#### SATELLITE RADIO IN CHINA

TSI will continue to use satellite TV and radio in China, including in Tibet -- for only a fraction of the cost of shortwave or medium wave transmissions to the region – to leverage the widespread use of satellite receiver dishes in remote locations or where local cable and Internet access is restricted.

#### VIRTUAL DESKTOP INTERFACE

To enable greater workforce flexibility and enhanced telework capability, TSI will continue its efforts in FY 2015 to establish a Virtual Desktop Interface (VDI). The VDI will give remote users access to a full desktop suite of tools, including the Dalet Video and Audio clients and Microsoft Office, when they make a remote connection to the Agency's network.

#### CONSOLIDATING AND MODERNIZING WORKSPACE

TSI is leveraging a forced move of about 60 staff members from the Mary A. Switzer Building to consolidate and modernize workspace in the Wilbur J. Cohen Building headquarters. GSA offered to fund moving costs for BBG staff from the Switzer Building to a third Federal facility, BBG counteroffered by proposing to use that funding to transform 35,000 square feet of space on the fourth floor of the Cohen Building from private offices to a more modern, open workspace. These build-out spaces will be completed in mid-FY 2015.

As an ongoing initiative to reduce expensive lease costs, BBG is continuing to identify office space in the Cohen Building to convert to an open design. This conversion, scheduled for FY 2015 and FY 2016, will enable the Agency to accommodate 34 new staff members as part of its strategic focus on Africa, and allow BBG to meet its strategic goals without leasing additional office space.





## RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

RFE/RL Russian's Sergey Dobrynin (top) covering civil unrest in the region; Baku Bureau Correspondent Vusala Alibeyli (bottom left) reporting on a demonstration in Azerbaijan; RFE/RL's bi-weekly Russian language program *Donbass Realities* (bottom right) focuses on the events in eastern Ukraine on Donbass TV.

# Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	<b>\$95,950</b>	<b>\$103,850</b>	<b>\$116,800</b>

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

### This FY 2016 Budget request:

- proposes an investment in RFE/RL to pursue a comprehensive strategy for refuting aggressive Russian pressure and disinformation and engaging Russian-speaking audiences both within Russia and around the world, including expansion of television/video and new digital initiatives. (See the Investment Proposal on page eight for more details.)
- proposes administrative cuts and restructuring of News and Current Affairs, and ending service in Avar, Circassian and Macedonian in accordance with Administration policy on public messaging and global engagement strategies.
- proposes reducing RFE/RL's medium wave and shortwave transmission to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and discontinuing RFE/RL's shortwave broadcasts to Russia, the Caucasus, and Belarus in accordance with Administration policy on public messaging and global engagement strategies.

## OVERVIEW

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) is a private, nonprofit, multimedia broadcasting corporation that serves as a surrogate media source in 28 languages and in 21 countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Russia. With headquarters in Prague, 19 local bureaus (including Moscow, Kabul and Islamabad) and more than 1,000 journalists throughout its broadcast region, RFE/RL's proximity to its audiences facilitates the production of exclusive, relevant, locally-oriented programming in a cost-effective manner.

Reaching 23 million people each week, RFE/RL provides what many people cannot get locally: uncensored local and regional news, responsible discussion, and open debate. RFE/RL offers its audiences the rich, immediate, and interactive content they seek, using both radio and the latest digital technologies – Internet, SMS text, online video, satellite radio and television, and popular social media networks – to reach people in some of the most closed societies on earth. With press freedom worldwide at its lowest level in more than a decade, RFE/RL's mission to provide uncensored, fact-based surrogate news to inform and engage audiences in countries without free media remains as important as ever.

RFE/RL's language services bring the values of independent journalism to millions of listeners, while operating in environments that present profound risks to its journalists. In December 2014, Azerbaijani authorities jailed RFE/RL contributor Khadija Ismayilova, raided and sealed RFE/RL's Baku Bureau, and interrogated the Bureau's staff. RFE/RL correspondents were subjected to intimidation by authorities and non-state actors in Belarus, Macedonia, Russia, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan,

## FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crises and Unrest**

- Driving News Coverage of the Ukraine Crisis
- Investigative Reporting
- Increased Coverage of Crimea
- Response to Russian Propaganda

### **Cross-U.S. International Media Collaboration and Coordination**

- Sharing Content and Programming
- Merging Services
- Sharing Technological Capabilities

### **Expanding TV and Video Production**

- TV Initiatives
- Internet TV Initiatives
- Documentaries

### **Delivering High-Quality Journalism**

- Afghanistan Election Coverage
- Covering Bilateral Security Agreement with Afghanistan
- Nuclear Talks with Iran
- Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region

### **FY 2014 & 2015 Awards and Accolades**

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Russian-Language Programming**

- Current Time for Central Asia
- Video Channel Showcasing Independent Russian Journalists
- New Anti-propaganda and Corruption Programs
- Digital Media Response Teams
- Increased Television Programming

### **Farda TV**

#### **Content Creation Capacity**

- Building Video Production Infrastructure
- Updating Website to Mobile-Friendly Responsive Design

Afghanistan, and Pakistan; its reporters were beaten and threatened for covering Ukraine's Euromaidan protests and Russia's occupation of Crimea; and Baghdad Bureau Chief Dr. Mohammed Bdaiwi Owaid Al-Shammari was shot and killed in the Iraqi capital in March 2014.

RFE/RL is USIM's leader in the digital sphere and has played a key role in ensuring that USIM constantly strives to modernize and compete among the ranks of international broadcasters, which now includes a host of new and well-resourced players, from Al Jazeera to Russia Today and Sputnik. RFE/RL has built up an impressive and highly creative online technology team, Pangea Digital, which consists of highly skilled web professionals who design, develop and create new tools on an ongoing basis for more than 150

USIM news websites, including VOA, Radio/TV Marti, Radio Sawa, Alhurra Television and IBB. The RFE/RL-created Pangea content management system (CMS) drives the digital user experience for millions of visitors and consumers of BBG network content. Tailored for online journalism, Pangea offers simple and seamless live-streaming of video and audio content from remote locations and is used by thousands of USIM journalists every day to easily create, edit, and publish news reports on multiple platforms in more than 60 languages across 200 countries and territories worldwide. RFE/RL's Pangea Digital team leads the way for USIM Internet content distribution, development, design and innovation among BBG networks.

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crises and Unrest**

*(Ukraine, Crimea and Refuting Russian Propaganda)*



#### **DRIVING NEWS COVERAGE OF UKRIANIAN CRISIS**

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service was one of the first media outlets to report live on the protests that broke out on Kyiv's Independence Square ("Maidan") in November 2013. RFE/RL audiences grew dramatically as a result of the Service's daily, live coverage of the Kyiv protests. International media, including CNN,

ABC, Sky News, BuzzFeed, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* cited and linked to RFE/RL's coverage of the massive protests in Ukraine. Innovative use of streaming technologies to report live from the scene fueled unprecedented growth in the Ukrainian Service's web audience: 60 million visits and 112 million page views during the first half of 2014, which constituted a tenfold increase over the same period the previous year. Activity at other RFE/RL websites also spiked as a result of the Ukrainian Service's Maidan coverage – visits to the websites of the Russian and Belarus Services and to the English-language homepage doubled, and visits to the Armenian Service's

website increased by 80 percent. The Ukrainian Service continued to provide dynamic coverage of the evolving situation, including Russia's annexation of Crimea and separatist uprisings in East and South Ukraine.

#### INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

In September 2014, the Russian Defense Ministry continued to deny that it had quietly deployed Russian soldiers into eastern Ukraine. The Russian Service investigated reports that wounded Russian soldiers returning from "service trips" near the Ukrainian border and relatives of soldiers killed in action there had been told to remain silent, with in-depth reports from St. Petersburg and Pskov and a multimedia talk show on the *Secret War* featuring relatives of missing soldiers from St. Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don, and Saratov. In addition, the Russian Service created a new content rubric on its website, *Russia against the War*, to provide a platform for those opposed to the deployment of the Russian military in Ukraine.

#### INCREASED COVERAGE OF CRIMEA

With additional funding in FY 2014, RFE/RL enhanced its coverage of Crimea, expanded its network of journalists and stringers in Eastern Ukraine, and launched a Crimea website in Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar. The site provides uncensored, accurate and objective information to audiences in this hard-to-reach area. By December 2014, RFE/RL's Crimea site had attracted over 21 million visits and nearly 34 million page views since its launch in March.



RFE/RL's blog Ukraine Unspun unravels the truth behind information coming from Russian and Ukrainian media, politicians and activists.

#### RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN PROGANDA

To address questionable and unsupported assertions in the Russian and pro-Russian media about what was happening in Crimea and Ukraine, the Ukrainian Service began a daily analysis of Ukrainian and Russian media coverage called *Lie of the Day*. For English-language audiences, RFE/RL launched the *Ukraine Unspun* blog, to present a clearer picture of the information war between Ukraine and Russia. In June 2014, RFE/RL's Moldova Service partnered with public Radio Moldova to debut a new, monthly Russian-language roundtable show to refute Kremlin propaganda infiltrating the Moldovan media market. Another program, *The Weekend With Europa Libera*, is also being broadcast twice each week by Moldovan Public Radio, once in Romanian, once in Russian, while in November 2014 the Moldova Service launched a daily, 10-minute television program, *Clear and Simple*, in Romanian and in Russian.

## Cross- U.S. International Media (USIM) Collaboration and Coordination

RFE/RL has been working closely with its USIM sister entities to maximize USIM's efficiency and reach by harmonizing content and program streams of common language services and by sharing technological capabilities. For example:

### SHARING CONTENT AND PROGRAMMING

- In April 2014, RFE/RL's Georgian Service increased its radio programming to 18 hours daily via longtime nationwide FM affiliate Radio Green Wave. RFE/RL's Georgian Service (including its Russian-language unit *Ekho Kavkaza*), Russian Service, Armenian Service and Azerbaijani Service as well as VOA's Georgian Service, Learning English Branch and Music Mix have contributed and produced content for the expanded stream.
- RFE/RL's Radio Farda and VOA's Persian News Network have taken steps to enhance collaboration in editorial operations, leverage assets more effectively, eliminate unnecessary overlap, and achieve other efficiencies. As a result of these efforts, RFE/RL plans to expand TV production in FY 2015, including a mid-afternoon show and news updates to be aired on a shared VOA-RFE/RL stream.
- In FY 2014, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service began running three of VOA's Azerbaijani Service programs on its *Azadliqradiosu TV* satellite stream on Hotbird.
- RFE/RL and VOA continually strive to ensure that their Afghanistan programming and in-country operations are harmonized. RFE/RL and VOA have realized savings by sharing a bureau as well as technical, administrative, and physical security services in Kabul. In FY 2016, both RFE/RL and VOA will implement reductions to their shortwave and medium wave transmissions. RFE/RL and VOA plan to work together to optimize program content and time clocks for the remaining Afghan delivery streams.

### MERGING SERVICES

- Pending Congressional approval of BBG's FY 2015 operating plan, RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq will be merged into MBN resulting in up to \$1 million in annual savings.

### SHARING TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITES

- In FY 2015, RFE/RL's Pangea Digital team assumed responsibility for live-streaming of VOA audio and video channels from IBB's Network Communications Center (NCC). At a significantly reduced cost, RFE/RL now manages recording for on-demand playback of audio/video content for all of VOA's 36 language services and is working with OCB on a similar project to realize additional savings for USIM.

## Expanding TV and Video Production

While radio remains the delivery platform of choice in some of RFE/RL's markets, most of RFE/RL's target audiences have turned to television and digital media for information and engagement. Accordingly, RFE/RL has shifted its focus in many markets to provide more and enhanced digital content via online and mobile web, SMS, mobile apps, social networks and, in a growing number of markets, local and satellite TV. RFE/RL's language services have initiated new television programs and video products to reach their audiences. RFE/RL's investments in live-streaming technologies in 2013 and 2014 were critical to this success. As a testament to the quality of RFE/RL's video products, more than 740 media outlets in 60 countries used RFE/RL video content in 2014.<sup>4</sup>

### TV INITIATIVES IN FY 2014 AND FY 2015 INCLUDED:

- RFE/RL'S UKRAINIAN SERVICE:
  - (1) "We Together," a 30-minute weekly program, in partnership with the First Ukraine satellite television network;
  - (2) "Donbas Realities," a 15-minute, bi-weekly Russian-language program about events in the restive eastern areas of Ukraine that airs on Donbas TV;

---

<sup>4</sup> Figures cited were compiled by the Reuters news agency.

- (3) "Crimea Realities," a 20-minute weekly program on the Ukrainian satellite television news channel "24" that examines developments on the Russia-annexed peninsula; and
  - (4) "Schemes," a weekly program that focuses on corruption and airs on Ukrainian state television's First Channel.
- RFE/RL'S AFGHAN SERVICE:  
Radio Azadi now produces a live monthly roundtable discussion program, "Together," with Ariana TV, the third most popular network in Afghanistan with a weekly reach of nearly 35 percent.

### INTERNET TV INITIATIVES IN FY 2014 AND FY 2015 INCLUDED:

- RFE/RL'S ARMENIAN SERVICE:  
Audiences continue to grow for *News Center*, the Armenian Service's one-hour Internet TV program. The daily show brings tens of thousands of viewers to the Service's website and YouTube channel, where the program has been watched more than one million times since its inception. Regional television stations are rebroadcasting the program on their airwaves, and Armenian news websites often stream "News Center" on their own sites.
- RFE/RL'S UKRAINIAN SERVICE:  
In May 2014, the Ukrainian Service hosted *Elections 2014*, which included a six-hour Internet TV marathon and 13 hours of

continuously updated web coverage from studios in Kyiv and Moscow. Reporting included streamed Live-U feeds from Kharkiv, Skype interviews from Brussels, live reports from the Central Election Commission and the press centers of leading presidential candidates Petro Poroshenko and Yulia Tymoshenko, and dozens of video reports from Ukraine, Great Britain and the Czech Republic.

- **RFE/RL'S BELARUS SERVICE:**  
On May 9, Victory Day and also the opening day of the World Ice Hockey Championships in Minsk, Belarus Service journalists gave website and YouTube viewers a live, three-hour guided tour of the Belarusian capital, talking to sports fans, war veterans, police officers, and others they met about current issues, and inviting its audience to offer comments, questions and suggestions in real time. Plainclothes security officers eventually shut down the live broadcast, but not before the project earned praise from the Belarusian Association of Journalists and exiled opposition leader Zianon Pazniak.
- **RFE/RL'S RUSSIAN SERVICE:**  
More than 115,000 people watched the Russian Service's five hours of live online video coverage of the September 21 "March for Peace" in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk, opposing Russia's covert war in Ukraine. The coverage was viewed over 260,000 times on YouTube as well.

- **RFE/RL'S MULTIMEDIA TEAM:**  
Multimedia content has become an essential element in RFE/RL's digital strategy. RFE/RL's Multimedia Unit launched a centrally-produced daily Video Roundup of original news stories from RFE/RL's broadcast region in English and Russian, which is translated and posted to RFE/RL's websites as well as to social media platforms. Stories from the roundup have been picked up by CNN, Yahoo News, Vice News, and others. RFE/RL's Afghan, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen services have developed local versions of the roundup. The Kyrgyz version airs daily in Russian and Kyrgyz in partnership with Kyrgyz National Television. Otyrar TV, a leading regional private TV channel in Kazakhstan, picked up the Kazakh Service's weekly news roundup, resulting in increased audience numbers and engagement in both Russian and Kazakh on RFE/RL's Facebook pages.



#### DOCUMENTARIES

Beyond video production, RFE/RL is expanding into new genres. RFE/RL's Armenian Service produced *New Aleppo*, a documentary about the 15,000 ethnic Armenians who have sought refuge in Armenia as a result of the Syrian civil war. The film premiered

on Armenia's largest television network, Armenia TV, in April 2014. The Armenian Service also produced the feature film *Charents* about the life of the great Armenian poet and victim of Joseph Stalin's terror, Yeghishe Charents, and his wife Izabella. The film premiered in Yerevan in 2013 and was shown on two major TV networks, including Armenia

TV. Shorter-form RFE/RL documentaries include the Ukrainian Service's video documentary on a visit to Luhansk in eastern Ukraine, which was aired by Ukraine's news channel "24," and the Tatar-Bashkir Service's mini-documentary on the harsh reality for Crimean Tatars on the annexed Crimean peninsula during this tumultuous year.

### **Delivering High-Quality Journalism**

RFE/RL language services provided exclusive coverage of a number of important and historic events in 2014. For their high-quality reporting, RFE/RL journalists received a substantial number of awards in FY 2014 and 2015.



**AFGHANISTAN ELECTION COVERAGE**  
RFE/RL's Afghan Service joined with state broadcaster RTA to sponsor two presidential candidate debates in February 2014 in Kabul. Eight of the 11 registered candidates took part in the debates, which were moderated by RFE/RL Regional Director Akbar Ayazi and aired live. On June 14, the day of Afghanistan's presidential runoff election, the Afghan Service provided 12 hours of live coverage, maintained live blogs in Dari and Pashto, and actively posted content to Facebook (Dari and Pashto), YouTube and Twitter (Dari and Pashto). The Service covered the

September 29 inauguration of Ashraf Ghani as President, marking Afghanistan's first-ever democratic transition of power.

### **COVERING BILATERAL SECURITY AGREEMENT WITH AFGHANISTAN**

The Service also reported on the September 30 signing of a bilateral security agreement (BSA) between Afghanistan and the U.S., providing the audience an explanation of the key points in the BSA. The Service secured an exclusive interview with former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai on November 16, during which Karzai spoke of his administration's troubled relationship with Washington.

### **NUCLEAR TALKS WITH IRAN**

In 2014, Radio Farda, RFE/RL's Persian-language service for Iran, sent a correspondent to Vienna in February, May and November to provide exclusive, around-the-clock coverage of the nuclear talks between Iran and the P5+1 countries. Radio Farda also secured interviews on the talks with U.S. chief negotiator and Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman and former State Department special advisor on nonproliferation and arms control Robert Einhorn. Radio Farda's coverage

on the web and social media helped the service reach significant new audiences in 2013 and 2014, with the number of fans on Facebook exceeding 1.3 million.

**AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER REGION**  
In 2014, Radio Mashaal, RFE/RL's Pashto-language service to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, provided on-location coverage of the June 8-9 terrorist attack on Karachi International Airport, September's massive monsoon flooding in Kashmir and Punjab, and the

December 16 school massacre in Peshawar. RFE/RL's coverage of the Peshawar massacre was picked up by multiple media outlets, including CBS News, the New Yorker, and the Atlantic. Radio Mashaal secured an interview (in Pashto) with Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai on October 10, the same day the prize was announced. Mashaal also gathered the joyous reaction of residents of Peshawar and Yousafzai's hometown of Mingora, in Pakistan's Swat valley.

## FY 2014 AND FY 2015 AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

RFE/RL journalists won a **Gold Award and four Silver Awards at the 20th Annual Communicator Awards**, announced by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts on April 29, 2014. Radio Farda's Farshid Manafi won a Gold Award and Silver Award for his work on the satire program "Pas Farda," the Balkan Service's Milos Teodorovic won a Silver Award for his radio program "Gaf nedelje," Russian Service freelancer Olga Loginova won a Silver Award for her video documentary "Raising Julia," and the Belarus Service and Multimedia Unit won a Silver Award for their video documentary "Oswald in Minsk."

RFE/RL won a **"People's Lovie" and a Bronze Award in the 4th Annual Lovie Awards**, which recognize the best of the European web. The "Birds-eye View of 'Euromaidan' Protests in Kyiv" video by the Ukrainian Service won in the "Internet Video / Events & Live Broadcasts" category.

Radio Farda's Mahtab Vahidi Rad was named a **Finalist in the 2014 New York**

**Festival's International Radio Program Awards** for her special report, "The Execution Game." RFE/RL was named a Finalist in the 2014 Association for International Broadcasting Awards for its "Sochi: Outside the Arena" project.

Moldova Service Director Oana Serafim and two former RFE/RL Romanian Service journalists were awarded **Romania's "Order of Faithful Service" in 2014** by President Traian Basescu, for their "outstanding contributions to the promotion of freedom and democracy in Romania and Eastern Europe."

Oleksiy Matsuka, the host of the Ukrainian Service's "Donbas.Realities" television program, received the **Canadian Journalists for Free Expression's International Press Freedom Award**.

The **Webby Awards for excellence and innovation** on the Internet recognized RFE/RL as an Official Honoree for the third consecutive year in the Web/Radio and Podcasts category and for the first time in the Mobile and Apps/News category

## FY 2015 – FY 2016 INITIATIVES

### **Russian-Language Programming**

In October 2014, RFE/RL and VOA launched "Current Time," a joint production undertaken in partnership with public and private broadcasters and Internet portals in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Ukraine. Drawing on a network of reporters in the region, European capitals, RFE/RL's headquarters in Prague, and VOA in Washington, D.C., it presents a daily, 30-minute mix of live news coverage, interviews, original features, and political satire. Targeting Russian-language television audiences in countries neighboring Russia as well as digital audiences in Russia and around the world, it offers content that is not otherwise available on state-controlled Russian media to provide a "reality check" on local events. Early in calendar year 2015, "Current Time" will be joined by a live Sunday edition produced by RFE/RL's Russian Service, as well as a Saturday edition produced by VOA's Russian Service.

As part of its expanded efforts to reach Russian-speaking audiences in Russia and neighboring countries, such as the above, RFE/RL will deploy resources in FY 2015 in support of:

- **CURRENT TIME FOR CENTRAL ASIA**  
An edition for Central Asia that will include a corresponding Russian-language website.
- **VIDEO CHANNEL SHOWCASING INDEPENDENT RUSSIAN JOURNALISTS**  
Rus2Web, a YouTube site and channel curated by RFE/RL that will serve as "digital samizdat," giving voice to independent Russian-language journalists and filmmakers whose work is not readily available, or is even banned, by Kremlin-controlled media.
- **NEW ANTI-PROPAGANDA AND CORRUPTION PROGRAMS**  
"Footage vs. Footage," a daily video program that directly challenges Russian television propaganda, and "Corruption Index," a website focused on exposing corruption in Russia and reporting on ways to address and change corrupt practices.
- **DIGITAL MEDIA RESPONSE TEAMS**  
A digital media response team that will confront disinformation propagated in RFE/RL's broadcast region with timely factual information via multiple social platforms. The team will monitor popular discussions, engage audiences on social media, push out accurate and reliable USIM reporting, and provide promotional support to new digital initiatives.

■ **INCREASED TELEVISION PROGRAMMING**

In FY 2016, RFE/RL will expand its Russian-language programming, including TV programming in partnership with affiliate partner TV

stations in the Russian periphery to at least four hours daily and significantly increase its digital offerings. More details are included in the Investment Proposal “Countering a Revanchist Russia.”

**Farda TV**

Radio Farda will launch a 15-minute TV news magazine on VOA’s stream that will air midday in Tehran. Radio Farda is also preparing to produce six new five-

minute TV news updates for VOA’s Persian Service. These broadcasts will provide Iranian audiences with up-to-date news throughout the day.

**Content Creation Capacity**

**BUILDING VIDEO PRODUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE**

To successfully implement the above-outlined initiatives, RFE/RL will update its technological and support infrastructure and modernize its studios in Prague to better support the company’s growing technical requirements and expanding volume of video production. RFE/RL will recruit skilled and talented technical, editorial, production and managerial staff to oversee and guide corporate-wide development in this area. In addition, video production units will be established within RFE/RL’s broadcast headquarters in Prague and in several of

its regional bureaus, such as in Moldova where RFE/RL is currently upgrading its bureau facilities to increase the service’s capacity to create high-quality video content. Other bureaus will also be upgraded in FY 2015 and FY 2016.

**UPDATING WEBSITE TO MOBILE-FRIENDLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN**

RFE/RL is redesigning its Pangea-supported websites, including an upgrade to a responsive-design platform. The redesign will be rolled out in FY 2015 and FY 2016.

# Radio Free Asia

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	\$35,950	\$38,255	\$38,500

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

This FY 2016 Budget request:

- proposes closing RFA’s Bangkok office, to focus more on in-country reporting.
- proposes RFA beginning an in-depth reporting project on growing Chinese influence in our target countries. The services of each country will report on Chinese government businesses, loans and gifts of military hardware and how they affect the people of their country. The stories will then be shared across services for broadcast in all of our target countries including China where the public has little information on the depth of Chinese spending abroad.



## OVERVIEW

Radio Free Asia (RFA) is a private, nonprofit, multimedia corporation that serves as a surrogate broadcaster, substituting for domestic media in Asian countries that prevent or restrict freedom of the press. RFA is funded through, and operates under, a grant agreement with BBC. RFA broadcasts in Burmese, Cantonese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, Tibetan, Uyghur and Vietnamese on shortwave, medium wave, satellite, television and the Internet. It delivers accurate and timely local news, information and commentary, and provides a public forum for the audiences it serves.

RFA is an authoritative source of East and Southeast Asian news. Each month, Radio Free Asia averages over 500 pickups of its exclusive news coverage in major regional outlets and global publications. This includes RFA-generated content that is republished and linked-to on well-trafficked global and regional blogs. These media pickups, particularly by large syndicates and wire services, amplify RFA's reach into its target countries.

As part of BBC's anti-censorship efforts, RFA manages the Open Technology Fund (OTF), which supports research to better understand the types of censorship occurring around the globe and the effectiveness of the tools to combat that censorship. RFA's efforts help expand the knowledge base for the Internet freedom community and improve the effectiveness of anti-censorship efforts. OTF supports the development of software to secure communications in countries where governments engage in online repression. These tools provide individuals with the capabilities to protect their communications from repressive regimes and offer to censor content secure access.

## FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Expanding Local News for Local People**

Enhanced Coverage in China's  
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region  
Local Reporting to Burma, Cambodia and Laos  
Internet Coverage Increases

### **Producing In-Depth Investigative Journalism**

Cantonese Service Investigative Journalism  
Letters by Chinese Prisoners of Conscience  
New Mandarin Series on China's NGO's

### **Providing Exceptional Content**

Tibetan Service Program Launched  
Online Column on Books About Tibetan Culture  
Reporting on Korean Refugees in Southeast Asia  
Uyghur Service Increases Focus on Women's Issues

### **Reaching Audiences through New Technology**

RFA Website Visitors 1.9 Million in May  
E-books New Priority for RFA Online  
RFA Increasing Social Media Presence

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Mobile, New Media and Digital Formats**

Adapting Content for Mobile Devices  
New Media Production Desk  
Innovations with Digital Formats

### **China**

Expanding TV Programming Direct-to-Home Satellite  
Delivery to China  
Increased Visual and Video Content and Launch  
of Blogs from Popular Chinese Bloggers  
Increased Cantonese Social Media Engagement,  
Investigative Reporting and TV Programming  
More Uyghur Service Stringers

### **Fielding More Local Journalists**

Burmese, Khmer & Vietnamese Services

### **Myanmar**

Coverage of Myanmar's 2015 National Election  
Special Series on Myanmar Farmers

### **Tibet**

Tibetan Service Special Series and  
Ebooks on Plight of Tibetan Nomads  
Increased Tibetan Television Programming & Reporting

### **North Korea**

Special Series on North Korean Prisons and Laborers  
Special Series on Myanmar's Journey from  
Dictatorship to Democracy for North Korean Audience

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### **Expanding Local News for Local People**

**ENHANCED COVERAGE IN CHINA'S XINJIANG UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION**  
In response to increased ethnic violence in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in 2014, RFA's Uyghur Service was at the forefront of breaking news in the region. RFA's Cantonese and Mandarin Services also enhanced coverage of the unrest in XUAR, reporting on China's policies toward the country's national minorities.

**LOCAL REPORTING TO BURMA, CAMBODIA AND LAOS**  
RFA continued its emphasis on local reporting in its Burmese, Cambodian and Lao Services. For Cambodia, this means extensive coverage of the turmoil following the 2013's national elections and the ongoing negotiations between the government and the opposition before the next elections. In Burma, RFA is reporting on the country's slow move toward democracy. Ethnic violence, failed attempts at political reform and restrictions on freedom of

expression have been at the center of the Burmese Service's reporting. RFA continued efforts to reach audiences in Laos's highly restricted media environment. RFA Lao launched a call-in talk show this year, but shutdowns of distribution platforms have limited RFA's ability to reach these audiences. Some access RFA content through the Internet, but the government is threatening new restrictions on that medium.

**INTERNET COVERAGE INCREASES**  
RFA is increasingly using the Internet to cover local events. It is expanding its production of original and visual coverage, e.g., slideshows of images of major events in Cambodia are produced daily and attract increasing audiences on Facebook and Twitter. RFA Vietnamese added more reporting, blogging, and video of local news, resulting in increased traffic to its website and Facebook presence.

## Producing In-Depth Investigative Journalism

### CANTONESE SERVICE INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Despite increased security measures across China in anticipation of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, RFA's Cantonese Service conducted a six-month undercover investigation of the operational safety at nuclear power plants in Guangdong, China's most populous province. A four-part multimedia report aired in September, covering issues such as land grabs related to the construction of the plants, nuclear waste disposal and potential public health hazards that official Chinese media do not report. RFA's Cantonese Service received international recognition (a Gracie Award and a New York Festivals International Program Award) for its investigative reporting on the staggering rise in "birth tourism" – Chinese women coming to the United States to give birth.

### LETTERS BY CHINESE PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

RFA Mandarin launched *Letters from Prison*, a weekly online column and radio program featuring letters written by Chinese prisoners of conscience and their families. Working with the Independent Chinese PEN Center, RFA's Mandarin Service obtained exclusive broadcast and Internet rights to a large collection of writings that gives voice to the thwarted democratic aspirations of Chinese human rights activists, and presents the hopes and fears of their families.

### NEW MANDARIN SERIES ON CHINA'S NGOS

RFA's Mandarin Service also launched an in-depth series on Chinese-based non-governmental organizations. Some 500,000 NGOs have registered in China during the past 25 years; an additional 1.5 million operate without a license. They include groups that promote environmental protection to organizations that defend the rights of migrant workers to legal centers for victims of domestic violence. This series explores the role NGOs play in China's nascent civil society.

## Providing Exceptional Content

### TIBETAN SERVICE PROGRAM LAUNCHED

In FY 2014, RFA's Tibetan Service launched *The Himalayas*, a weekly feature on the cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties among Tibetans and Tibetan-Buddhist communities along the Himalaya Mountains in Tibet, Pakistan,

India, Nepal and Bhutan. Major themes explored include how Tibetan communities in South Asia adapt to the new economies in the region and how these people cope with challenges created when traditional and contemporary Himalayan politics meet.

#### ONLINE COLUMN ON BOOKS ABOUT TIBETAN CULTURE

To enrich the intellectual life of its listeners, the Tibetan Service also created a "book corner," an online column featuring reviews by the Service on books in Tibetan, Chinese and English that focus on Tibetan history, culture and literature.

#### REPORTING ON KOREAN REFUGEES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Each year, an estimated 1,500 North Korean refugees transit through Myanmar, Thailand and Laos before settling in a third country. RFA's Korean Service has recruited a contract

journalist in Myanmar to cover the exodus by interviewing defectors as well as Chinese citizens who live in towns that border Myanmar and regularly visit Pyongyang.

#### UYGHUR SERVICE INCREASES FOCUS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

In the Xinjiang province of China, as part of a continuing effort to appeal to a wider variety of demographics, RFA's Uyghur Service significantly increased its coverage of issues related to women, youth and health by interviewing more women and health experts and by producing more youth-related features.

### Reaching Audiences through New Technology

**RFA WEBSITE VISITORS 1.9 MILLION IN MAY**  
Traffic to *RFA.org* is steady at around 1.5 million monthly visitors, but the entity's specific language service sites received record numbers of visits during the China-Vietnam naval confrontations in the South China Sea in 2014, driving the total number of RFA website visitors to 1.9 million in May.

Most of RFA's language services have e-book projects in development -- some featuring repurposed RFA news content; others contain original material. For example, RFA plans to publish an original e-book profiling women fighting for human rights in target countries.



#### E-BOOKS NEW PRIORITY FOR RFA ONLINE

E-books are the fastest growing format for digital content consumed on mobile devices and a priority for RFA

online. RFA has had great success in publishing e-books that can be downloaded easily and shared via email or on thumb drives, circumvention  
**FY 2015-FY 2016 INITIATIVES**

#### RFA INCREASING SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

As RFA bolsters its presence on social media, services continue to increase their online followers, while anticipating the next move by government censors. RFA Vietnamese, for example, has steadily increased the number of its Facebook and YouTube followers, despite Vietnamese government attempts to block the Service through false reports of abuse. RFA is working with colleagues at BBG to develop solutions to these challenges.

#### **ADAPTING CONTENT FOR MOBILE DEVICES**

As audiences move to mobile devices, RFA will continue to adapt its content, making it more appealing and accessible on smart phones and tablets. With the support of BBG's Office of Digital & Design Innovation (ODDI), usability studies were conducted to prepare for the redesign of RFA's mobile sites. Understanding the mobile markets of its target countries positions RFA to capture greater viewership with compelling, salient, visual content.

#### **NEW MEDIA PRODUCTION DESK**

During FY 2015 and continuing into FY 2016, RFA will fund a production desk staffed with new media specialists who are able to take on more assignments and conduct social media campaigns. Most of RFA's target markets possess a tech-savvy young generation. RFA is a 21st century media organization – an organization that is agile, mobile, with a robust social presence and video content combined with its hard-hitting journalism. This additional funding will enable collaboration with regional programmers and developers whose in-depth understanding of their online markets will enhance RFA's digital development.

#### **EXPANDING TV PROGRAMMING DIRECT-TO-HOME SATELLITE DELIVERY TO CHINA**

In early FY 2015, RFA's Mandarin Service launched TV programming targeting tens of millions of satellite dish owners in China. Hard news-oriented, this half-hour daily production features interviews, in-depth coverage and analysis with visuals sourced from China-based citizen journalists and Mandarin stringers across Asia. Audience response has been

immediate and overwhelmingly favorable. In FY 2016, RFA Mandarin will continue its efforts in in-depth investigative reporting.

#### **INCREASED VISUAL AND VIDEO CONTENT AND LAUNCH OF BLOGS FROM POPULAR CHINESE BLOGGERS**

FY 2015 "Growing U.S. Engagement in East and Southeast Asia" investment funds will be used to increase and improve local gathering of visual content, which will continue to be enhanced in FY 2016. This investment provides the equipment and editorial staff to make maximum use of new video. In Myanmar, where audience research shows growing use of television, this will mean further development of video content. For RFA Mandarin, funding will provide staff to upgrade daily webcasts and to recruit China-based citizen journalists to generate unique and exclusive visuals. In addition, the Service's website will launch at least two blogs authored by popular Chinese microbloggers whose social media accounts have been closed as Beijing began another round of cyber "crime" crackdown.

#### **COVERAGE OF MYANMAR'S 2015 NATIONAL ELECTION**

RFA will use investment funds to provide in-depth, independent and balanced coverage of Myanmar's 2015 national elections, which will be critical to the country's democratic development. RFA Burmese will field reporters in all states and divisions of the country, and expand its broadcasts to provide information on voting, campaigning, election results and their ramifications.

#### **FIELDING MORE LOCAL JOURNALISTS**

RFA Burmese, Khmer and Vietnamese will use investment funds to field more local journalists to provide broader

coverage of the daily lives of average citizens. This will enable more in-depth reporting that is sought after by audiences in these countries on issues such as domestic politics, the environment, health, education, and interethnic relations.

#### **SPECIAL SERIES ON MYANMAR FARMERS**

In FY 2016, RFA Burmese Service will be producing a special series on Myanmar's farmers—what their lives were like under the junta, what if anything has changed, and the challenges they continue to face.

#### **TIBETAN SERVICE SPECIAL SERIES AND EBOOKS ON PLIGHT OF TIBETAN NOMADS**

RFA's Tibetan Service will present a multi-part series on the plight of Tibetan nomads. The series will explore the challenges resettled nomads face, including unemployment, alcoholism and a high rate of suicide. In addition, the Service will produce a series on the environmental challenges facing Tibet as a result of reckless mining and logging by Beijing to fuel China's breakneck economic development. Both series will be converted to e-Books with text and interactive visuals.

#### **INCREASED TIBETAN TELEVISION PROGRAMMING**

With FY 2015 investment funds, RFA Tibetan launched on February 19, 2015, the first day of the Tibetan New Year, its satellite TV program. The thrice weekly 30-minute segment presents news from inside Tibet, as well as in-depth analysis by leading experts in the Tibetan diaspora. RFA Tibetan Service plans to increase its TV programming to five days a week in FY 2016.

#### **INCREASED TIBETAN REPORTING**

The additional funding will also enable the Tibetan Service to provide comprehensive coverage of the 2015 general elections of the India-based Tibetan Parliament-in-exile. The Service plans to produce a multimedia series on the Dalai Lama. The Service also will cover events in Tibetan communities throughout the world marking the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Dalai Lama.

#### **INCREASED CANTONESE SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING AND TV PROGRAMMING**

Building on its investigative reporting and moving into more multi-platforms, RFA Cantonese Service will use the FY 2015 investment to hire a social media engagement specialist and fund its Hong Kong-based video crew's undercover reporting of public health hazards in China. Additional reporters will be added to enhance coverage of pro-democracy-related events in Hong Kong, including weekend seminars and rallies organized by grassroots NGOs. With more visual content, the service will enhance its 30-minute weekend satellite TV segment, launched in February 2015. RFA's Cantonese Service will pursue partnerships with Hong Kong-based Internet radio stations to carry RFA Cantonese programming.

**MORE UYGHUR SERVICE STRINGERS**

Violence in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region highlights the importance of additional resources for RFA's Uyghur Service. Investment funding will allow the Service to recruit more stringers in Central Asia to enhance coverage of the Uyghur diaspora.

**SPECIAL SERIES AND EBOOKS ON NORTH KOREAN PRISONS AND LABORERS IN RUSSIA**

RFA's Korean Service will produce a series on arbitrary detentions and prison conditions in North Korea that will include visuals and interviews with survivors of North Korean labor camps. In addition, the Service will present a series on the working and living conditions of North Korean laborers in Russia. Both series will be converted to e-Books.

**SPECIAL SERIES ON MYANMAR'S JOURNEY FROM DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY FOR NORTH KOREAN AUDIENCE**

In early FY 2016, in anticipation of Myanmar's upcoming general elections, the Korean Service will begin production of a series on Myanmar's journey from dictatorship to democracy, with a focus on the lessons North Korea can learn from Myanmar.

**INNOVATIONS WITH DIGITAL FORMATS**

In all markets, RFA will continue to innovate with new digital formats and features, including games and e-books. RFA's Cantonese, Mandarin, Tibetan, Uyghur and Korean Services will increase their production of e-books on subjects that government authorities consider to be taboo and emerging issues in target areas. Topics for coverage include: the women behind China's political prisoners, how to scale the "Great Firewall" of China's Internet, and North Korean water pollution.

# Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	<b>\$109,513</b>	<b>\$109,408</b>	<b>\$109,600</b>

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

### This FY 2016 Budget request:

- **proposes continued investment in MBN’s multi-media *Raise Your Voice* initiative designed to engage the people of Iraq in discussion of current issues and challenges to their and their country’s future in this time of unrest.**
- **proposes offsetting FY 2016 operational costs with MBN recoveries from prior year obligations to reduce the request for new obligational authority.**

## OVERVIEW

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc. (MBN) is a private, non-profit multi-media broadcasting corporation that provides the United States a direct line of communication with Arabic-speaking people of the Middle East and North Africa. MBN is funded through a grant from BBG. MBN’s mission is to inform and engage the people of the Middle East and provide objective, accurate and relevant news and information about the United States, the region and the world. MBN supports democratic values by expanding the spectrum of ideas, opinions and perspectives available in the region’s media. MBN brands include Alhurra, Radio Sawa and Afia Darfur. BBG research estimates that Alhurra and Radio Sawa have an unduplicated weekly audience of 29 million people across the Middle East.

MBN produces programming at its headquarters in Northern Virginia and at facilities in Washington, D.C., Baghdad, Dubai, Beirut, Cairo and Jerusalem. Satellite and terrestrial television broadcasts, and medium wave (AM), shortwave, and FM radio broadcasts are transmitted via IBB’s global transmission network. Beyond traditional media, MBN engages with audiences across the spectrum of digital platforms, including its Alhurra and Radio Sawa websites, Radio Sawa and Alhurra Android and iPhone/iPad apps, Facebook and YouTube.

## FY 14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Directly Communicating America's Policies and Actions**

Presentation of American Policies  
White House, Congressional, Pentagon and State Department Correspondents  
U.S. and Foreign Correspondents

### **Engaging Audiences on Social Issues**

Original and Compelling Content

### **Informing Those Electing New Leaders**

Coverage of Elections in Region  
Egyptian Vote on New Constitution  
Presidential Election in Egypt  
Presidential Election in Algeria  
Bahraini Parliamentary Election  
Tunisian Presidential Election

### **Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crisis and Unrest**

Covering ISIL in Iraq  
Syria's Civil War and Refugee Crisis  
Gaza

### **Targeting Key Markets on the Most Effective Platforms**

Sawa on FM in Mauritania  
High-definition Version of Alhurra on Hotbird 13  
Radio Sawa App Launched

## FY 15-16 INITIATIVES

### **Engagement Campaign Focused on the Fight Against Extremism in Iraq**

Broadcast Components  
Digital and Social Media Components

### **Establishing Additional Bureaus**

Northern Iraq  
Maghreb Bureaus

### **Increasing Efficiency and Impact while Reducing Costs**

Consolidating All Arabic Radio Programming to Iraq to One Stream  
Increasing Reach & Impact Through Marketing and Partnerships  
Reducing Base Operating Costs



Alhurra-Iraq Television and Radio Sawa provided extensive coverage of the Iraqi elections.

Alhurra reporter Yehia Kassem reports from near a rocket blast in Gaza.





Alhurra's television show *Eye on Democracy*.

## MBN PROGRAMMING

### **Alhurra**

Alhurra's Pan-Arab news and information channel was launched in February 2004 to provide a reliable source of objective television news and information across the Middle East.

Alhurra-Iraq was launched in April 2004 to broadcast targeted local news and programming to the people of Iraq.

### PROVIDES THE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

Alhurra is unique in the Middle East satellite television market in its ability to provide audiences the American perspective, giving context to America's policies as well as insight from diverse voices throughout the U.S. public policy community and the people of the United States. Its news and information programming provides a platform for engagement with audiences on social, cultural and political issues as well as a forum for objective discussion and the introduction of viewpoints not routinely given voice on media in the region.

### LIVE NEWSCASTS WITH BREAKING NEWS

Alhurra broadcasts live newscasts throughout the day with breaking news, as events warrant, including coverage of major U.S. foreign policy speeches as well as press conferences and relevant Congressional hearings. Its informational programming seeks to expand the range of ideas and perspectives presented in Middle East media, particularly on issues such as human rights, religious freedom and the rights of women. Alhurra's signature program, *Al Youm (Today)*, is unique in the region, presenting a cross section of perspectives on issues from the Middle East as well as news and information about America. *Al Youm* is broadcast live, three hours per day, five days per week from four cities across the Middle East (Dubai, Beirut, Cairo and Jerusalem) and from the United States. It is rebroadcast with updated news inserts the morning following the live broadcast.

**RECOGNIZED FOR  
HIGH-QUALITY BROADCASTING**

Alhurra has been recognized by numerous broadcasting organizations, film associations and human rights groups for its high quality broadcasting and on-air content. Alhurra-Iraq's prime time, daily, hour-long newscast, *Iraq Today*, is widely noted by Iraqi newsmakers as the show to watch to keep up on news across Iraq.

**DISTRIBUTED VIA SATELLITE, TERRESTRIAL  
TRANSMITTERS AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS**

Alhurra is distributed on satellite via Arabsat (standard definition), Nilesat (standard definition), and Hotbird (high definition) as well as via terrestrial transmitters in Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, Tikrit, and Al Hilla. Alhurra is streamed on its news and information website, *Alhurra.com*, and content is distributed through digital platforms, including YouTube and mobile apps.



Radio Sawa launched a 24/7 FM station in Mauritania in 2014. U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Marion Wohlers (second from left) is pictured here with Mauritanian women who performed at the station's opening ceremonies.

**Radio Sawa**

Radio Sawa was launched in 2002 and broadcasts 24/7 on eight programming streams targeting the sub-regions of the Middle East. Radio Sawa's pioneering format is designed to attract listeners from the overwhelmingly young (less than 35 years of age) Middle Eastern population. Its blend of music and

information programming was unique at the time it was launched -- a carefully crafted blend of Western and Middle Eastern sounds that attracts listeners to stay tuned for news and information programming. Research shows the effectiveness of Radio Sawa in reaching

listeners and holding their attention to news and information programming.

#### NEARLY SIX HOURS OF NEWS PROGRAMMING DAILY

Radio Sawa broadcasts nearly six hours of news and current affairs programming per day, including newscasts at 15 and 45 minutes past each hour. Daily 20-minute news magazines provide listeners with in-depth reporting and news analysis. Radio Sawa also broadcasts live simultaneous translations of major speeches on Middle East issues by senior U.S. officials as well as important U.N. debates and press conferences on issues affecting U.S. policy in the region. Radio Sawa clearly and effectively presents U.S. policies through a range of targeted programming that includes its weekly signature current affairs discussion, *Free Zone*. Radio Sawa broadcasts localized newscasts to Iraq as well as feature stories to Iraq that focus on the rule of

#### Afia Darfur

MBN launched the Afia Darfur program in 2008. The all-news and information radio program includes news about Darfur and the world that is not accessible through Sudan state media. The program features interviews with U.S. officials, human rights experts, Sudanese professionals, activists, government officials, citizens and NGO representatives. The 30-minute program provides information on refugee and internally displaced persons

law, democratic political debate and citizen concerns.

#### FM AND AM STREAMS

Radio Sawa can be heard throughout the Middle East on eight FM and medium wave (AM) streams:

- Iraq (FM and AM),
- the Levant (including Jordan and the West Bank) (FM),
- the Persian Gulf (FM and AM),
- Egypt (AM),
- Morocco (FM),
- Sudan, Libya, Djibouti and Yemen (FM and AM),
- Lebanon and Syria (FM), and
- Mauritania (FM)

Radio Sawa is streamed on its news and information website *radiosawa.com* and through Android and iPhone/iPad apps.

issues and health as well as features about the culture, history and heritage of Darfur's diverse ethnic groups. The program also includes relevant information from daily White House, State Department and Pentagon briefings.

Afia Darfur is broadcast to Darfur via shortwave. Programming targets people in Darfur and eastern Chad. It also is heard in Khartoum.

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Directly Communicating America's Policies and Actions

**PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN POLICIES**  
Alhurra and Radio Sawa work diligently to ensure that America and its policies and voices are accurately presented to the people of the Middle East. Alhurra and Radio Sawa's daily coverage provides U.S. policymakers a direct line of communication with the people of the Middle East. It is uniquely positioned to provide U.S. officials a forum to articulate U.S. positions without distortion or filter. Given the fast-moving and historic developments across the region, this outreach that counters distortion of U.S. policy is invaluable. Through its coverage and interviews, Alhurra and Radio Sawa provide appropriate context for U.S. policy statements and direction that affect the region.

#### WHITE HOUSE, CONGRESSIONAL, PENTAGON AND STATE DEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENTS

MBN has full-time correspondents who cover the White House, Congress, the Pentagon and the State Department.

Their reports on of key statements, speeches and hearings are featured daily on Alhurra and Radio Sawa. For example, as part of Alhurra's coverage of Iraq's battle against the ISIS insurgency, the network aired President Obama's June 13 remarks, live with simultaneous translation in Arabic. Alhurra was the only Arabic language channel to carry Secretary Kerry's September 19 remarks on Iraq to the UNSC. Alhurra and Radio Sawa also featured reaction from Senator John McCain (R-AZ), and Representatives Charles Ruppertsberger (D-MD) and Gerald Connolly (D-VA).

#### U.S. AND FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS

While the network's U.S. correspondents establish the foundation for thorough coverage of American positions on regional issues, Alhurra and Radio Sawa foreign correspondents ensure contextual, targeted coverage of U.S. policy, including when the President and policymakers visit the region to engage in regional diplomacy.

### Engaging Audiences on Social Issues in the Wake of Political Change

**ORIGINAL AND COMPELLING CONTENT**  
Alhurra continues its commitment to develop original content from the region that resonates with viewers through award winning programs like *Rayheen ala Fain* (*Where do we go from here?*) *Street Pulse*, and *Our Neighborhood*. These original, non-scripted shows are engaging on social and political issues confronted at this critical time in Egypt.

- The critically acclaimed *Rayheen ala Fain* launched its second season with a new cast of six Egyptian young adults. Episodes tackled difficult social issues such as sexual harassment, women's rights, jobs and education. When a cast member was killed during a rally the night that former Egyptian president Morsi was ousted, Alhurra reported the incident and tackled the tragedy head on. *Rayheen ala Fain's*

Facebook following skyrocketed to more than 590,000 “Likes” during the program’s second season.

- Alhurra’s *Street Pulse* is in its second season of investigative reporting, highlighting the social and political issues Egyptians face on a daily basis. The show received a CINE Special Jury Award for an episode that spotlighted poor working conditions of rock quarry workers.
- Alhurra’s new *Our Neighborhood* launched in December provides insight into social issues and

perspectives on Egypt and its future in the wake of political upheaval.

*Our Neighborhood* introduces individuals from the many diverse neighborhoods in and around Cairo, Egypt. Each have something to say about Egypt, their lives, their future and the future of their country. Addressing a broad range of social issues from human rights, women’s rights, unemployment, religion or freedom of speech, the subjects tell us what is happening to them, their neighborhood and their country.

### **Informing those Electing New Leaders**

#### **COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS IN REGION**

Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa give their audiences comprehensive coverage of elections across the region and provided context for people striving to effect greater economic, civil and political stability in their countries. Alhurra and Radio Sawa offered balanced, unique and insightful coverage of Egypt’s constitutional referendum and presidential election, Iraq’s parliamentary elections, and Algeria’s presidential election. Four years after the revolutions swept the Middle East and North Africa, Alhurra Television and Radio Sawa were there as Bahrain held its first full Parliamentary elections and Tunisia held its first Presidential election since the Arab Spring.

#### **EGYPTIAN VOTE ON NEW CONSTITUTION**

As Egyptians prepared to vote on a new constitution, Alhurra TV provided audiences the latest news, expert analysis and reaction from the street. In the week leading up to the referendum, Alhurra aired a daily program called

*Constitutional Referendum*. During the voting, the network expanded its reporting to include more than 15 hours of live coverage.

#### **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN EGYPT**

In the run-up to Egypt’s second presidential election in two years, Alhurra and Radio Sawa provided extensive, multi-platform coverage through Election Day and beyond. With reporters based in 10 cities across the country, Alhurra spoke with voters about the issues influencing their decision, including security, the economy, minority rights, power outages, fuel shortages and unemployment. The network explored each of the candidate’s positions on these key issues. *Al Youm* interviewed analysts from the United States, Russia, the European Union and Saudi Arabia to gauge international reaction to the election and its potential impact on regional international relations. Radio Sawa expanded its newscasts on its Egyptian and pan-Arab streams

throughout the three days of voting. Radio Sawa's coverage included interviews with the Secretary General of the Egyptian High Elections Commission and the head of the international mission that monitored the elections as well as representatives of the Sisi and Sabahi campaigns. Radio Sawa's daily talk show, *Sawa Magazine*, examined candidate's foreign policy platform and featured a round-up of voter comments from the first day of balloting.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ALGERIA

When Algerians held presidential elections in April, Alhurra and Radio Sawa expanded their coverage to provide the latest voting results, analysis and audience reaction. Alhurra expanded its newscasts to feature comprehensive Election Day coverage. Alhurra reported on the role of Algerian youth and women in the election, and the increasing use of social media during the campaign. Radio Sawa secured interviews with several newsmakers, including former Algerian Prime Minister Ahmad Ben Bitoor, and representatives of the Bouteflika, Rabaaeen and Benflis campaigns to discuss their candidates' positions.

#### BAHRAINI PARLIMENTARY ELECTION

Alhurra's coverage of the Bahraini election started well before the Nov. 22 Parliamentary election. The network reported on the reason why the Bahraini Shiite's calling for a boycott of the election. The day before the Parliamentary election, Alhurra's *Eye on Democracy* hosted a former Member of Parliament, a Bahraini human rights lawyer, a member of the Shura Council and female candidate running for office. The guests debated the merits of

participating vs. boycotting the elections, as well as the political crisis in Bahrain. On Election Day, the Alhurra program *Thirty Minutes* hosted the head of the Bahraini Transparency Association and a Member of the Parliament. The discussion focused on the impact the boycott had on the outcome of the elections. Leading up to the elections, MBN's digital coverage included extensive analysis of the elections and the impact they would have on the Gulf country. Alhurra.com used citizen journalists on social media platforms to offer in-depth analysis of the political context of the controversial election, including its chances in bridging the gaps between Sunnis and Shiites of the Kingdom.

#### TUNISIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Alhurra also extensively covered the Tunisian Presidential election held on Nov. 23, including an extended two-hour episode of *Free Hour*. During the discussion Tunisian politicians and analysts joined American experts on the Middle East to look at how the election will impact the country. The television network covered the announcements of the election results live. Following the announcement of a run-off election, Alhurra's *Free Hour* hosted an in-depth discussion with Tunisian politicians and researchers to address the political polarization likely to occur leading up to the run-off election. Radio Sawa interviewed leaders in parties across the political spectrum. MBN Digital coverage followed major campaign events that led up to the election, including poll results, two candidates withdrawing from the race, as well as early voting, and an official statement by Secretary

Kerry on the election. Coverage of voting and announcement of results was extensive and incorporated Alhurra's video reports, Radio Sawa's audio reports and reports by wires and local media.

Alhurra had more than nine hours of live continuous coverage of voting in the runoff election for the Tunisian president. The in-depth coverage included analysis from Tunisian and American experts about the issues resonating with voters and looking to the future of the Tunisia. They discussed topics such as whether Tunisia is a model for the Arab Spring countries, the role of international observers in the

election, issues of concern for Tunisian women and youth and the future of Tunisian foreign policy. Following the election, *Free Hour* hosted Tunisian analysts to discuss what the country can expect from their new leader. By interviewing Tunisian Members of Parliament, analysts and journalists, Radio Sawa's coverage focused on what is needed to form the new government, interviewing the Tunisian Prime Minister and the Tunisian Minister of Interior. MBN's Digital team produced multi-media packages with the latest news on the election from Alhurra and Radio Sawa, as well as a story that included American experts and their views on the election.

## **Ensuring a Reliable Source of Information During Crisis and Unrest**

### **COVERING ISIL IN IRAQ**

Since sectarian violence began to escalate in Iraq, Alhurra-Iraq and Radio Sawa have been a balanced source of news and information in the region. When the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) pushed across Northern Iraq, Alhurra-Iraq and Radio Sawa provided live updates from hotspots, including Kirkuk, Irbil and the outskirts of Mosul. On Alhurra and Radio Sawa's dedicated streams to Iraq, newscasts and talk shows were expanded to provide Iraqi listeners with the latest details on the ISIL surge.

### **SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR AND REFUGEE CRISIS**

Syria's civil war and refugee crisis are covered daily by Alhurra and Radio Sawa. Alhurra regularly carries United Nations briefings regarding relief efforts and the U.N.'s war crimes investigation

in Syria. Alhurra featured extensive reporting of the Geneva conferences on Syria, including live coverage of speeches and remarks made by participants such as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

### **GAZA**

Alhurra and Radio Sawa report from the Gaza Strip and Israel, with correspondents on the front lines, and routinely present White House, State Department and Congressional reaction to the violence. Alhurra has carried remarks and press conferences by President Barack Obama, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Alhurra and Radio Sawa also have interviewed representatives of the Israeli Defense Forces and the Palestinian Authority. The networks featured extensive

coverage of the Paris meetings as top diplomats tried to reach a lasting truce between Hamas and Israel. Weekly

discussion programs also focus on the situation.

## Targeting Key Markets on the Most Effective Platforms

### SAWA ON FM IN MAURITANIA

In June 2014, Radio Sawa launched a programming stream on FM in Nouakchott, Mauritania. Localized content engages audiences on Radio Sawa's programs (e.g., *Poetry Jam* and *Sawa Chat*) that encourage listeners to share their opinions. Responses are played on the air. The level of listener participation demonstrates that Sawa is reaching its target audience of young adults in a meaningful way.

popular radio network in the Middle East. The app provides access to live broadcasts of Radio Sawa's eight localized streams and includes an interactive feature that allows users to participate in *Sawa Chat* discussions on current topics. The app also allows users to download podcasts of information programs, such as *Sawa Magazine*, and hourly newscasts to satisfy on-demand listening.

### HIGH-DEFINITION VERSION OF ALHURRA ON HOTBIRD 13

MBN launched a high-definition (HD) version of Alhurra on the Hotbird 13 satellite to meet the growing demand for HD programming in the region. Using existing BBC satellite bandwidth and taking advantage of multi-format technical equipment, MBN was able to rework its technical specifications to launch in HD, while sustaining standard definition signals on Arabsat and Nilesat.

### RADIO SAWA APP LAUNCHED

Radio Sawa and MBN Digital, in conjunction with the BBC's Office of Digital & Design Innovation, launched a dedicated Radio Sawa app for Android and iPhone/iPad devices. The app is intended to further engage Arab youth, giving them 24/7 access to the most



## FY 2015 – FY 2016 INITIATIVES

### **Engagement Campaign Focused on the Fight Against Extremism in Iraq**

An FY 2016 investment will provide base funding to continue MBN's *Raise Your Voice Campaign* to be launched in FY 2015 to engage Iraqis in discussion and debate about the fight against extremism and underlying causes of terrorism. The multimedia effort, which includes television, radio and social media components, will provide Iraqis with the opportunity to voice their opinions and discuss these issues relevant to their daily lives and future.

#### **BROADCAST COMPONENTS**

New television and radio call-in shows will serve as a platform for listeners to discuss and debate the effects of terrorism, extremism, and intolerance. The daily radio show and weekly television show will invite discourse with the hosts, guests in Baghdad, and each other.

New television shows will provide a platform for:

- Perspectives of NGOs, Iraqi students, and academia on current challenges and the future;
- Showcasing local acts of heroism in confronting these challenging times;
- The view from Northern Iraq;
- Families who have had their lives changed by ISIL

#### **DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA COMPONENTS**

The digital initiative will amplify moderate voices as well as address the

underlying issues that lead to extremism, such as unemployment, religious literalism, and lack of rights for women and minorities. The project is driven by introducing a single root issue topic that is discussed for duration of two weeks by essayists, reporters and the wider community. The website will feature thought essays, investigative reports, Google Hangout discussions, infographics, short videos, discussion summaries around a selected theme at the root of violent extremism.

Community managers will stoke and moderate discussion on social media platforms, including use of related Alhurra Iraq video (via YouTube) Radio Sawa morning call-in show (via Soundcloud). The project will also have a companion English "selects" website that will showcase a portion of the best essays and reports for English speakers and allow policy makers to have English essays translated for the Arabic community to discuss.

The success of this campaign will be measured primarily by the level of engagement, the high-level of discourse and whether the community can propose positive solutions for a better future. This campaign is in addition to the numerous daily news reports on ISIL and the fight against it that currently run daily on all of MBN's platforms.

## **Establishing Additional News Bureaus**

### **NORTHERN IRAQ**

MBN plans to establish a bureau in Northern Iraq to further its reach across the country and increase programming from the Northern provinces. The new bureau will support Alhurra-Iraq, Radio Sawa, and VOA operations.

### **MAGHREB BUREAUS**

MBN will begin programming from its new bureau in Rabat as a hub from

which U.S. international media (USIM) will increase coverage of challenges throughout the Maghreb. Smaller bureaus in Tunis and two additional cities in the Maghreb region will ensure robust, heightened USIM coverage of this region's evolving political and social landscape. In 2016, Alhurra will launch at least one new current affairs program exploring issues of concern to the people of the Maghreb region.

## **Increasing Efficiency and Impact While Reducing Costs**

### **CONSOLIDATING ALL ARABIC RADIO PROGRAMMING TO IRAQ TO ONE STREAM**

In April 2015, Radio Sawa's Iraq stream will expand to reflect the consolidation of all U.S. civilian international radio broadcasting in Arabic, as notified in the FY 2015 operating plan. Reflecting BBG's and the Administration's global engagement strategy to address overlapping language services, RFE/RL's Iraq service will be discontinued and consolidated in 2015.

### **INCREASING REACH & IMPACT THROUGH MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS**

MBN will increase its reach and impact through additional marketing and branding efforts in the region, and by identifying and pursuing productive partnerships.

### **REDUCING BASE OPERATING COSTS**

To direct as many resources as possible towards programming goals, MBN will continue reducing base operating costs by eliminating wire services, implementing strategies to curb communications expenditures, continuing efforts to increase vendor sources and streamlining administration and other operations.

MBN will continue to review its overseas facilities and operations to ensure efficiency and increase flexibility to meet USIM production needs.

In FY 2016, MBN proposes to offset operational costs through use of prior year obligations no longer needed for their intended purpose. In a thorough review of outstanding obligations, \$2.13 million in prior year balances is proposed to offset MBN's FY 2016 operational costs.

# Broadcasting Capital Improvements

	2014 ENACTED	2015 PROGRAM PLAN	2016 REQUESTED
FUNDING (\$ in thousands)	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$4,800</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

## NOTABLE FY 2016 PROGRAM CHANGES

- The FY 2016 Budget proposes investments in BCI to continue shortwave realignment, increase**

**satellite capacity to accommodate HDTV, and continue VOA's migration to HDTV.**

## OVERVIEW

Broadcasting Capital Improvements (BCI) provides funding for large-scale capital projects and for improvements and maintenance of BBG's global transmission network and digital multimedia infrastructure. The Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI) manages many of the BCI projects in IBB. The BCI account also supports capital projects managed by the IBB Office of Security, VOA Television, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting.

TSI regularly assesses the effectiveness of its transmission resources to better serve priority audiences, respond to evolving media preferences, and meet new programming requirements. The rapid pace of change in audience media preferences and broadcast technology requires BBG to provide critical capital upgrades to its operations.

## FY 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Maintaining and Repairing Global Network Infrastructure

#### ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROGRAM

The BCI annual maintenance and repair program addresses essential requirements to maintain the reliability and availability of a worldwide network of transmitting stations that carry the bulk of BBG programming to intended audiences. As BBG has consolidated and

reduced its radio transmitting facilities worldwide, preventive and programmed maintenance to keep the remaining network in operating condition has become even more critical.

Essential broadcasting equipment and structures at remote locations, frequently exposed to extreme and

highly corrosive environments, require regular maintenance to prevent catastrophic breakdowns. The Agency's transmitting facilities in Cyprus, Djibouti, Northern Marianas (Saipan and Tinian), Sao Tome and Sri Lanka are particularly vulnerable to corrosion because of their proximity to salt and moisture from the seas and winds. Similarly, for the Botswana Transmitting Station, industrial pollution from smelting plants produces another corrosive environment. These sites require routine inspection and a robust preventive antenna maintenance program.

#### **STORM DAMAGE REPAIR**

In 2013, two storms damaged most of the antenna structures at the Sri Lanka Transmitting Station. Inspection of the antenna system indicated that badly corroded bridle cables and spreader bars were so structurally weakened that even a moderate storm caused a major antenna collapse. In FY 2014, the station staff, with assistance from riggers from other network stations, rehabilitated

some antenna towers and structures; however, limited station staff and resources coupled with live transmission demands will delay completion of repairs through FY 2015 and possibly into FY 2016.

Typhoon Santi hit the Philippine's Tinang transmitting site in early FY 2014. This storm caused significant damage to the transmitter site, particularly to antennas and roofs of buildings. The station staff made some minor emergency repairs. FY 2014 BCI funding will replace the roof of the transmitter building with an extremely durable synthetic rubber membrane.

#### **ENERGY-CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

In line with energy-conservation efforts across the Federal sector, the Thailand Transmitting Station completed a project in FY 2014 to replace all six sets of its antenna tower strobe lights at Udom with energy-efficient LED strobes.

## **FY 2015-FY 2016 INITIATIVES**

#### **ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

BCI funding will be used for maintenance and repair of antenna structures in corrosive environments, including inspecting and replacing structural guy wires in the Northern Marianas, painting medium wave antenna towers in Cyprus, inspecting and addressing antenna maintenance concerns in Germany and Kuwait, and continued rebuilding of antenna structures in Sri Lanka.

#### **SWITCH REPLACEMENTS**

Eight of IBB's transmitting stations need to replace their 20-year-old Rolm Redwood PBX switches. TSI is implementing a plan to upgrade the existing systems with Cisco Call Managers. These Internet protocol-based PBX systems will enable the BBG to integrate the Agency's telecommunications network. Work is in progress to complete the Call Manager installations by the third quarter of FY 2015.

#### RECONFIGURATION AND EXPANSION OF SHORTWAVE INFRASTRUCTURE IN KUWAIT

BCI funds will be used to continue the planned reconfiguration and expansion of the shortwave broadcast infrastructure at the Kuwait Transmitting Station. This will allow BBG to enhance transmission to Iran and achieve cost savings for shortwave broadcasts. Because of the very low cost of electrical power in Kuwait, the Kuwait Transmitting Station is the least expensive IBB station to operate. This project will allow the Agency to shift higher cost transmissions from other stations in the IBB network to Kuwait.

#### REFURBISH TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE

BCI funds will be used to refurbish the Agency's transmission infrastructure, including building maintenance, roofing repairs and replacement, water line and septic systems maintenance; heating and cooling equipment maintenance and replacement, power plant maintenance, generator maintenance, building facilities and antenna structures painting, and roads and grounds maintenance. Of note is the completion of roof installation work in Sao Tome.

#### ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS

BCI funds will be used to continue electrical equipment inspections, repairs and upgrades, circuit breaker maintenance, and relay calibration throughout the transmission network to ensure a safe and reliable broadcast system. A contract award for this project is expected in FY 2015.

#### BOTSWANA AIR FILTRATION SYSTEM

BCI funding will enable the Agency to design an air filtration system for the administration and transmitter buildings

in Botswana. The nearby smelting plant emits a high level of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere, posing a significant health risk for Agency employees at the station. A contract was awarded for this project and will be implemented in FY 2015 and beyond.

#### COMPLETION OF NETWORK CONTROL CENTER REFURBISHMENT

As the Agency's central programming distribution hub for the past 20 years, the Network Control Center has experienced unprecedented and unplanned growth to meet evolving broadcast platforms and demands. To address growing physical and functional requirements, an extensive refurbishment effort began in 2013 under GSA management. Most of the utilities work has been completed, and the new video monitor wall and consoles have been installed. This complex project is expected to be completed in FY 2015.

#### FACILITIES CONDITION SURVEYS

TSI will restart the facilities condition surveys for the Agency's most critical sites. These surveys have provided useful guidance for pinpointing facility needs in the past.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy efficiency remains an important consideration as the BBG replaces outdated fixtures and equipment at its facilities. Consequently, the BBG is continuing its initiative to systematically upgrade all lighting fixtures to energy-efficient fixtures. All headquarters broadcast studios have been retrofitted with the new LED light bulbs or fixtures.

**SECURITY ASSESSMENTS AND UPGRADES**

The Office of Security will continue security assessments and projects at the BBG facilities domestically and overseas, including: replacement of an armored vehicle and anti-ram barriers, maintenance and repair of security systems and emergency radio systems, and expansion of access control/alarm systems. These services are vital to the protection of life and safety of the BBG personnel at headquarters in Washington, D.C., VOA overseas news bureaus, and TSI overseas transmitting stations.

**OCB TRANSMITTING STATION UPGRADES**

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting plans to build an earthen levee to protect the medium wave antenna field in Marathon, Florida, from increasingly frequent tidal flooding. They will repair an antenna monitoring system used to ensure the strength of the broadcast signal that reaches Havana and the surrounding area. In addition, OCB will begin to upgrade master control video switching and monitoring equipment to support formatting for modern, digital television receivers.

**OPEN WORKSPACE CONVERSION TO REDUCE AGENCY OFFICE SPACE COSTS**

BCI funds will continue to support major construction costs to expand the open-space design project in the Cohen Building beyond the fourth floor

consolidation that was prompted by the move of BBG staff members from the Switzer Building to the Cohen Building headquarters. Following the transformation of 35,000 square feet on the fourth floor from individual private offices to a more modern and open workspace, BBG is creating similar open areas in other parts of the Agency. These projects will reduce the Agency's rental costs as they facilitate the greater use of wireless office technology and create an office environment that encourages telework. The BBG has identified an additional 50,000 square feet of office space that can be converted to this open-space design concept. This conversion will allow the Agency to expand without the need to lease permanent office space.

**HDTV MIGRATION PROJECT**

VOA will continue the high definition television (HDTV) migration project, a multi-year effort to convert all VOA television productions to HD, which is increasingly the quality standard demanded by viewers around the world. Failure by BBG to quickly adopt HD technology will disrupt the Agency's ability to secure and maintain affiliates, and attract audiences. As part of this investment, VOA also will upgrade television studios and production equipment to ensure HD compatibility.

# Performance Budget Information

## INTRODUCTION

This Performance Budget includes a summary of the Broadcasting Board of Governors strategic plan, a summary of the status of the Agency's performance, and descriptions of the Agency's performance indicators. This integrated budget and performance section connects the BBG strategic goals, strategic and management objectives and performance goals, and it fulfills

requirements of the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 for an annual performance plan. BBG's annual Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) provides detailed performance information and can be found on the Agency website, [bbg.gov](http://bbg.gov).

## SUMMARY OF THE 2014-2018 BBG STRATEGIC PLAN

BBG's 2014-2018 strategic plan continues an ambitious roadmap to refine and expand the reach and impact of U.S. international media in support of American strategic interests. The plan informs the FY 2016 budget request and continues the integration of performance, budget planning and management of BBG.

The mission of the Broadcasting Board of Governors is to inform, engage and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.

**This mission is achieved through two strategic goals:**

- **Expand freedom of information and expression**
- **Communicate America's democratic experience**

These goals further BBG's mission of supporting freedom and democracy. The purpose of communicating America's democratic experience is not merely public diplomacy. By presenting a case study in the American experience, we also seek to help other countries navigate their governance challenges.

## CURRENT CONTEXT OF BBG

The key environmental factors facing BBG are: national security challenges, rising media competition and the multitude of modern communications technologies.

U.S. values of freedom and democracy are under assault. Resurgent authoritarianism and spreading extremism imperil U.S. interests. Europe is witnessing a return to Cold War tensions of state authority versus

popular will. The Middle East labors to support even modest pluralism and regain the democratic spirit of the Arab Spring. Syria is in chaos; Iraq might not be far behind. North Africa and the Sahel face rising extremism, from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to Boko Haram, now rivaling in ferocity the Taliban in South Asia.

The struggles unfolding have significant information or propaganda components. A war for influence is playing out on the stage of public opinion. Non-democratic forces run increasingly sophisticated information campaigns.

Consumers of news and information have an unprecedented array of options from which to choose. For example, citizen journalism provides broadcasters with opportunities to collect and disseminate information, while interacting with audiences. In many regions, BBG broadcasts face growing competition from local news sources and international broadcasters. While this information explosion seems to point to more openness and freedom, the trend in recent years has been toward less press freedom and growing Internet censorship in key markets. Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders warn of declines in world freedom and press freedom.

When U.S. international broadcasting began in 1942, programs were broadcast via shortwave. Since then, the number of transmission options has grown, and listener preferences and media access have changed. The technology driving transmitting and receiving broadcast signals is constantly improving and

changing. BBG has kept up with these developments, which offer extraordinary opportunities for unfiltered, direct dialogue with audiences around the world. BBG transmits programs through radio (shortwave, medium wave, FM and satellite), terrestrial and satellite television, the Internet (websites with streaming audio and video as well as social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube), and numerous mobile technologies, including SMS, apps and mobile Web.

To serve audiences in less developed areas of the world, BBG must continue to broadcast via traditional technologies such as shortwave and maintain capability on these platforms by replacing antiquated equipment. But to stay relevant in competitive news markets and serve current and future audiences, BBG must invest in new cutting-edge technology. In areas where ownership and usage of shortwave radio has declined significantly, the Agency has evolved away from broadcasting in shortwave. BBG has closed transmission stations, repurposed equipment and invested these savings in platforms that the audience has shifted to, primarily in digital media technology and other high-priority programming.

BBG relies on extensive market research to identify audience preferences and the most appropriate programming mix and delivery options for specific audiences. In addition to research about the effectiveness of programming, BBG commissions research on the overall media markets in its broadcast countries to better understand how these markets are developing and the capabilities that

each Agency network needs to remain competitive. As new technologies emerge, market research enables BBG to be forward-thinking and strategically positioned to fulfill its mission. The Broadcasting Board of Governors undertakes a comprehensive assessment of the languages in which Agency networks broadcast during its annual Language Service Review. This review examines qualitative and quantitative research on the performance of programming, audience reach and impact as well as media usage and ownership. The review forms the basis for proposing to enhance existing

language services, start new ones or, in some instances end broadcasts.

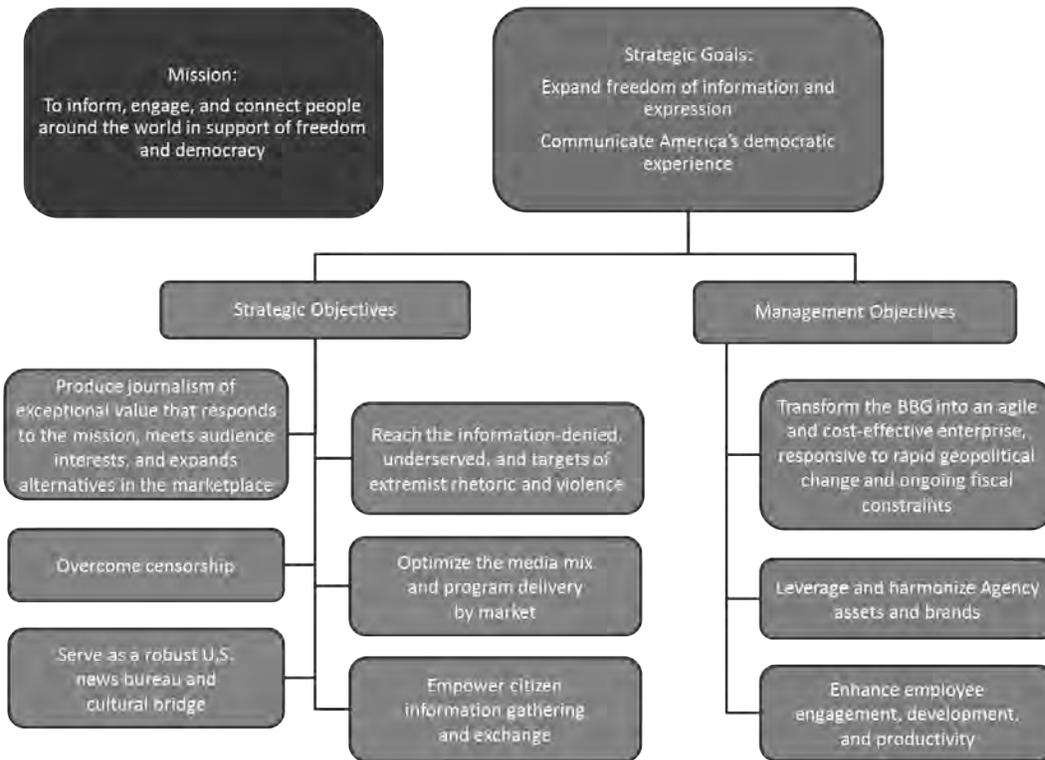
BBG's Strategic Plan gives highest priority to setting the program mix and delivery platforms to meet market demand. This is critical to ensure that BBG achieves its legislative mandate to reach as many people as possible with news and information that gains their trust and makes a difference in their lives by communicating standards for human rights, civil society, religious tolerance and transparency of government via the most effective delivery systems.

## IMPACT MODEL

In recognition that impact is about more than only audience reach, BBG's previous strategic plan set the goal of developing a multi-factor model to define impact. In 2014, the Agency began implementing the model. It ties to BBG's mission statement and examines effectiveness in the areas of informing, engaging and connecting audiences, and enabling change. These effects are considered in the short, medium and long term in various sectors -- people, local media and institutions. The model employs a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures.

This Impact Model informs the strategic plan and, particularly, the performance goals that support BBG's strategic objectives. During the past year, the model has formed the basis of our strategic review process in which the Agency sets clear goals and targets for performance indicators that define success in each target country and region.

## STRATEGIC AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE GOALS



BBG’s two strategic goals are supported by six strategic objectives and three management objectives, each of which has supporting performance goals. These objectives and goals map out Agency priorities for the next two years.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: PRODUCE JOURNALISM OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE THAT RESPONDS TO THE MISSION, MEETS AUDIENCE INTERESTS, AND EXPANDS ALTERNATIVES IN THE MARKETPLACE

Journalism is the daily work of the BBG broadcasters, and producing fact-based, verifiable news and information must be preeminent in Agency strategy. To have impact, BBG journalism must meet audiences’ interests along the breadth of subjects that matter to their lives and, at the same time, must add value in expanding the range of media

alternatives. Our aim is not just to follow the 24-hour news cycle but to drive the news agenda through original reporting, in-depth analysis, and a unique cross-cultural perspective that helps our audiences become sophisticated consumers of news and media.

- As mandated by Congress, BBG provides news and other programming that is accurate, objective, and comprehensive and in accordance with the highest professional standards of broadcast journalism.
  - Produce news and information, consistent with audience preferences and mission requirements, which are not addressed adequately by media in the target area, e.g., human rights and good governance.
  - Offer non-news content that research, web analytics, and audience and affiliate feedback show are of vital interest to audiences, such as health, science, and technology.
  - Produce enterprise reporting through deep and lasting exploration of critical issues in the countries we target.
- Co-create content with reputable partners, as appropriate and consistent with broadcasting standards and editorial guidelines.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: REACH SIGNIFICANT AUDIENCES**

Weekly Listening/Viewing Audiences (in millions)	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Estimate	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	134.2	164.6	167.5	171.6	172.0	175.0
MBN (Radio Sawa) <sup>2</sup>	13.4	11.1	11.5	11.3	11.5	10.0
MBN (Alhurra) <sup>2</sup>	22.9	21.9	23.0	20.9	22.0	20.0
RFE/RL	23.4	17.9	20.2	23.3	26.5	28.6
RFA	10.7	10.8	11.0	7.8	8.5	9.0
OCB <sup>3</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>1</sup>Measured weekly audience is influenced by a number of factors that vary across broadcasters, including number of languages, number and type of distribution platforms, and media environment.

<sup>2</sup>The BBG anticipates that it will be impossible to conduct a national survey in Syria in 2015 due to civil unrest, making it impossible to provide updated reach numbers to replace the 4 million audience measurement from 2010 that expires in FY2016.

<sup>3</sup>Because of the limitations of reliable survey data in Cuba, it is not possible to reliably measure weekly audience for OCB.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: PROVIDE PROGRAMMING THAT AUDIENCES FIND TRUSTWORTHY**

Program Credibility – percent of weekly audience who consider information to be very or somewhat trustworthy	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	92	89	90	89	90	91
MBN (Radio Sawa)	89	85	86	83	86	86
MBN (Alhurra)	84	84	86	84	86	86
RFE/RL	93	92	93	92	93	94
RFA	92	89	91	87	89	90
OCB	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Because of the limitations of reliable survey data in Cuba, it is not possible to reliably measure credibility for OCB.

**Performance Goal 3: Provide programming that increases the audiences' understanding of current events**

Understanding – percent of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of current events somewhat or a great deal	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	88	90	91	90	91	92
MBN (Radio Sawa)	70	80	81	77	81	81
MBN (Alhurra)	72	79	81	77	81	81
RFE/RL	91	90	91	86	88	90
RFA	92	97	91	88	90	90
OCB	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Because of the limitations of reliable survey data in Cuba, it is not possible to reliably measure understanding for OCB.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 4: PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL NEWS AND INFORMATION**

Uniqueness – percent of weekly audience reporting that broadcaster presents information they cannot get from other broadcasters	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	Incorporate into core questionnaire	Question has been incorporated into core questionnaire	Establish baselines during FY 2017 budget formulation	Set targets during FY 2017 budget formulation
MBN (Radio Sawa)				
MBN (Alhurra)				
RFE/RL				
RFA				
OCB				

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: REACH THE INFORMATION-DENIED, UNDERSERVED, AND TARGETS OF EXTREMIST RHETORIC AND VIOLENCE**

In deciding where to broadcast, BBG considers the local media situation and prioritizes countries that lack a free or developed press. Special consideration is given to populations at risk of violence due to extremist rhetoric. In all target countries, BBG broadcasters seek to grow their audience base and reach those traditionally underserved by our broadcasts. Populations in our target countries are overwhelmingly young – a challenge but also a chance for us to connect with a demographic that in the main has never even heard of us. Our current audiences are approximately 60 percent male and 40 percent female – an imbalance ripe for correcting. We understand that to reach and be relevant with these audiences we need to provide them with content that not only informs them of international and local

news, but assists them in building and participating in a civil society. BBG pays special attention to audiences in areas plagued by extremism, as extremist forces espouse a violent ideology and execute campaigns of terror that threaten U.S. and regional security and stymie free, open, democratic societies. Support for programming to these audiences is in the interests of U.S. national security.

- Prioritize countries lacking freedom and democracy or faced with extremism where accurate, credible news and information are lacking; boost service to these areas, where feasible.
- Introduce service in selected new languages to reach sizeable new audiences in important countries

where our products are urgently needed.

- Prioritize countries lacking freedom and democracy or faced with extremism where accurate, credible news and information are lacking; boost service to these areas, where feasible.
- Introduce service in selected new languages to reach sizeable new audiences in important countries where our products are urgently needed.
- Reach out to women and youth with the kinds of content and conversation they wish to have beyond traditional news and information paradigms.
- Sharpen audience segmentation and targeting to drive content strategies and better address gender and age

demographics, as well as psychographic segments.

- Create country-specific content streams in existing languages to augment news and information for priority countries, e.g., Egypt, Mali.
- Serve as a conduit for the transmission of reporting from inside closed societies to outside audiences.
- Ensure strong local news coverage, as warranted by events, to meet urgent audience needs in areas of crisis.
- Draw on the experiences of the world's many models of free societies, in particular the U.S., to present a broad array of political views and debates.

#### **PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: INCREASE AUDIENCE REACH IN ENVIRONMENTS SUBJECT TO EXTREMIST VIOLENCE**

	<b>FY 2014 Baseline</b>	<b>FY 2015 Target</b>	<b>FY 2016 Target</b>
Maintain significant reach in Iraq	35.5%	35.5%	35.5%
Increase reach in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa	8.9 million	8.9 million	9.5 million
Increase reach in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa	33.0 million	34.0 million	35.0 million
Increase weekly reach in Kenya	6.0% (Oct 2013)	0.5 percentage points additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)	1 percentage point additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)

Performance Goal 1 (Continued )	FY 2014 Baseline	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Increase weekly reach in Tanzania	20.3% (Sep 2012)	0.5 percentage point additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)	1 percentage points additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)
Increase weekly reach in Nigeria	16.9% (Mar 2014)	2 percentage point additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)	3 percentage points additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)
Increase weekly reach in Niger	16.0% (Dec 2013)	0.5 percentage points additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)	1 percentage points additional weekly reach (over FY13/14 levels)
Achieve significant impact in markets where BBG operates an FM transmitter	Accra, Ghana: 4.8% Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire: 14.5% Bamako, Mali: 7.6% Bangui, Central African Republic: 15.3% Freetown, Sierra Leone: 6.2% Hargeisa, Somalia: 41.3% Juba, South Sudan: 27.7% Kigali, Rwanda: 46.5% Nairobi, Kenya: 5.2% N'Djamena, Chad: 44.1% Nouakchott, Mauritania: no data Ougadougou, Burkina Faso: 9.9% <sup>4</sup> Sao Tome, Sao Tome and Principe: no data	7% weekly reach in each capital city with a new BBG FM transmitter	10% weekly reach in each capital city with a new BBG FM transmitter

<sup>1</sup>Survey dates: Benin (Jun 2013); Burkina Faso (May 2013); Burundi (Mar 2010); Cameroon (Apr 2013); Central African Republic (Nov 2012); Chad (Oct 2012); Congo, Brazzaville (Jun 2013); Congo, Kinshasa (Nov 2012); Cote d'Ivoire (Jan 2014); Guinea (Dec 2009); Mali (Dec 2013); Rwanda (May 2012); Senegal (May 2013).

<sup>2</sup>Survey dates: Ghana (Nov 2013); Kenya (Oct 2013); Liberia (Sep 2012); Nigeria (Mar 2014);

Sierra Leone (Mar 2010); Somalia (Feb 2013); South Africa (Dec 2012); South Sudan (Apr 2012); Tanzania (Sep 2012); Uganda (Jul 2012); Zambia (Jun 2013).

<sup>3</sup>Survey dates are the same as above.

<sup>4</sup>Reach in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso reflects radio and television audiences; it cannot be disaggregated.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: INCREASE AUDIENCE REACH IN ENVIRONMENTS LACKING INFORMATION**

	FY 2014 Baseline	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Expand weekly audience reach in Burma	11.2% (Mar 2014)	+1 percentage points	+2 percentage points
Expand weekly audience reach in Cambodia	30.8% (Jun 2014)	+1 percentage points	+2 percentage points
Expand weekly audience reach in Vietnam	1.9% (Mar 2013)	+1 percentage points	+2 percentage points
Expand digital audience reach in China	0.03% (Nov 2009)	+0.5 percentage points	+1 percentage points

**Performance Goal 3: Reach audiences with fact-based, credible information in environments targeted by state-sponsored misinformation campaigns**

	FY 2016 Target
Increase reach in the Russian Federation	Increase weekly reach by 1 percentage point over current level
Increase reach in Ukraine	Reach 15% of adults on all platforms
Increase reach in Moldova	Reach 14% of adults on all platforms
Increase reach in Kazakhstan	Reach 2% of adults on all platforms
Increase reach in Tajikistan	Reach 7.5% of adults on all platforms
Attract audiences in Estonia	Reach 3% of adults on all platforms
Attract audiences in Latvia	Reach 3% of adults on all platforms
Attract audiences in Lithuania	Reach 3% of adults on all platforms
Provide programming that audiences find trustworthy	75% of weekly audience in each market consider information to be very or somewhat trustworthy

**CONTEXTUAL INDICATORS:**

2014 Freedom House Rankings	# of BBG target countries ranked		
	Not Free	Partly Free	Free
Freedom of the Press	62	51	7
Freedom in the World (political)	48	49	23

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: OVERCOME CENSORSHIP**

For almost 70 years U.S. international broadcasting has fought censorship in all its forms. Today, as the global media environment undergoes a dynamic revolution, access to a truly free press is actually in decline. Jamming of radio and TV broadcasts, including our own, continues in a number of countries. Journalists suffer harassment and violence daily. Media laws often restrict free flows of information, limiting the ability of international news organizations to distribute their content. The Internet in particular is under assault. The Agency upholds the universal right of citizens everywhere to receive and impart information without restriction. We work on many fronts to make news and information accessible to our global audiences with the aim of enabling not only unfettered access to our own products but also the full spectrum of independent news sources on the Internet.

- Lead in assisting the world’s citizens to gain access to information on all platforms, advocating on the international stage and coordinating within the U.S. government and with international broadcasters and other allies.
- Help audiences understand through journalistic reports the practices and policies of Internet censorship and circumvention.
- Fund technologies that counter Internet censorship and Internet blocking.
- Increase effective use of social media and digital platforms to combat censorship.
- Provide in-house digital expertise to address real-time censorship and jamming issues in targeted regions.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: INCREASE TRAFFIC THROUGH INTERNET ANTI-CENSORSHIP PRODUCTS**

	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Increase proxy traffic through Ultrasurf	19,210 TB	20,000 TB	21,000 TB	21,900 TB	22,000 TB	23,000 TB
Increase proxy traffic through Psiphon	420 TB	1,961 TB	3,000 TB	4,125 TB	5,000 TB	7,500 TB
Increase Satellite Internet traffic to Cuba	24 GB	138 GB	180 GB	17 GB	24 GB	120 GB

Note: Satellite Internet traffic to Cuba decreased due to contractual limitations on bandwidth. Bandwidth ran out in 2013 and people stopped using the system. Since acquiring new bandwidth, users have been slow to return. It is hoped that given time and increased funding, numbers can return to initial growth rate.

**CONTEXTUAL INDICATOR:**

2014 Freedom House Rankings	# of BBG target countries ranked	
	Not Free	Partly Free
Freedom on the Net	11	2

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: OPTIMIZE THE MEDIA MIX AND PROGRAM DELIVERY BY MARKET**

It is essential that we reach audiences on their preferred media platforms. Yet the Agency's distribution methods and means have lagged shifts in media use. We must therefore align how we deliver our content with how consumers now access it. For traditional media, we must migrate to the most effective broadcast channels, including satellite TV and FM radio. We must accelerate our investment into growing and enhancing new distribution methods, with specific attention to social and mobile platforms. And considering we have one of the world's largest affiliate networks, we must aggressively expand and improve our affiliations and syndication of content in effective formats. Ultimately, the Agency is platform-agnostic. We

seek to do what works best for the market at hand to get our content to as many users as possible.

- Increase distribution on platforms that we know audiences are using – FM, satellite TV, and mobile devices – migrating away from legacy platforms where they do not reach audiences.
- Find creative ways to penetrate closed societies, through flash drives, DVDs, and other alternative delivery means.
- Expand local distribution through affiliation with strong local television and FM radio stations and, where possible, installation of FM transmitters.

- Draw on research and other inputs to tailor format and presentation styles to audience needs and media usage habits, creating content that can break through ever increasing clutter.
- Exploit the falling cost of video production by updating our broadcasting facilities to support growing audience appetite for TV and video. Support audience’s growing appetite for social media, TV, and video by purchasing equipment and rebuilding aging infrastructure and broadcasting facilities.
- Integrate and digitize all content – e.g. text, audio, photos, graphics, and video – on a common content management system to facilitate use across platforms, support on-demand needs of the audience, and increase use via syndication to affiliates.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: INCREASE WEB AND MOBILE TRAFFIC**

Average weekly visits to web and mobile sites	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	Roll out new analytics tool and establish baselines	4,948,200	Achieve 10% increase in weekly visits over FY 2014 baselines	Achieve 10% increase in weekly visits over FY 2015 levels
MBN (Alhurra)		147,200		
MBN (Sawa)		243,000		
RFE/RL		5,911,900		
RFA		922,700		
OCB		75,000		

Note: Web and mobile traffic is influenced by a number of factors that vary across broadcasters, including number of websites, number of languages, and media environment.

In FY 2014, the BBG switched analytics platforms, resulting in data discontinuity that requires rebaselining in FY 2014. VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and OCB numbers are provisional based on the initial configuration of the new analytics tool. The new configuration was audited, and the technical flaws discovered were resolved. MBN numbers are from the legacy analytics tool.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: BUILD STRONG AFFILIATE RELATIONSHIPS**

Number of affiliations (broadcast, online, and mobile)	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	383	2,252	2,400	1,838	1,900	1,950
RFE/RL	81	759	287	528	540	560
RFA	14	29	30	23	26	29

Note: In FY 2013, the BBG changed its methodology for counting affiliates. This stemmed, in part, from an upgrade to its affiliate database to promote better communication with affiliates, as well as the growing importance of digital outlets. Where previously only high impact, high quality radio and TV affiliates with signed contracts were tallied, the affiliation indicator now counts all stations or outlets that regularly retransmit content from BBG networks. The methodology for counting affiliates was further refined in FY 2014. 1,838 affiliates for VOA includes 1411 Affiliates, 33 Stations owned by BBG transmitting programming from VOA, and 394 Affiliates to the “Direct” newsfeed service. Previous estimates for RFE were undercounted.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: SERVE AS A ROBUST U.S. NEWS BUREAU AND CULTURAL BRIDGE**

Representing American society and presenting and discussing U.S. policy are legislated mandates for the Agency and thus constitute mission imperatives.

BBG coverage of the U.S. is comprehensive across all elements of society but aims overall to convey the practice of democracy in all of its complexity. It is not about persuading audiences to like us; it is about helping them see how we manage the challenges of our democratic society – from economic growth to fiscal crises to race relations to educating our youth to addressing environmental change.

These topic areas find ready comparisons in our target countries and resonate with our audiences in practical, meaningful ways. Carrying them out requires sensitivity and creativity. Currents of anti-Americanism still run strong in some parts of the world, necessitating deft outreach on our part that stresses dialogue not monologue.

The way people interact with media today, with emphasis on interaction, further affirms this approach. At the same time, America’s still dominant role on the global stage makes our country a focal point of international attention, and our national language is the one that tens of millions of people around the world seek to learn. VOA, in particular, is uniquely mandated and positioned to leverage these advantages to connect with diverse international audiences, serving as a U.S. news bureau for our affiliate partners and providing English-learning programming.

- Serve as a U.S. bureau for media outlets across the world that wish to engage with us for news, analysis, and perspectives from the United States – on the model that has succeeded in Armenia, Bolivia, Turkey, et al.

- Emphasize English learning as a vehicle for positive audience engagement and interaction as well as information on American society and culture.
- Meet the global interest in American politics with in-depth coverage and analysis of national elections and coverage of other political events to impart the news and to elucidate the democratic process, with stories localized to make them interesting to specific target regions.
- Satisfy the world’s growing appetite for learning English through TV and radio programs, online instruction, printed instructional materials, and innovative short-form videos posted on the Web.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: PROVIDE PROGRAMMING THAT INCREASES AUDIENCES’ UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES**

Understanding of U.S. society – percent of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of U.S. society somewhat or a great deal	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Estimate	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	Establish baselines	66	67	68

Note: Baselines for this measure are based on a very small sample of countries—mainly those surveyed in 2013/2014.

Understanding of U.S. foreign policy – percent of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of U.S. foreign policy somewhat or a great deal	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Estimate	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	Establish baselines	64	65	66

Note: Baselines for this measure are based on a very small sample of countries—mainly those surveyed in 2013/2014.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: EMPOWER CITIZEN INFORMATION GATHERING AND EXCHANGE

New and powerful web, mobile, and social media tools are enabling increasingly diverse voices to be heard around the world. These tools have made media personal, moving the power from centralized broadcasters to a new class of bloggers, activists, videographers, and a content-generating public. They are using media not only to tell their stories on a digital world stage but also to connect with one another to chart the future of their communities and build new forms of civil society. Social media are also changing the way news is gathered and distributed, requiring news organizations to adopt new work flows that allow them to use multiple platforms to deliver content to a global audience. Our Agency must aggressively pursue an innovation agenda that develops the next generation of content, tools, and distribution platforms.

- Nurture citizen journalism and channel user-generated content from inside repressive states.
- Link citizens within repressive societies and to external audiences through social media networks.
- Facilitate dialogue across religious, national and ethnic groups.
- Enter into a “global conversation” with our audiences by using social media tools to identify, source, and distribute news content into the channels where people are having conversations about their community and the world.
- Build new partnerships to create tools that help us more efficiently and effectively translate content for a global audience around high-quality news and information.
- Pursue partnerships with technologists around the globe who are building the next generation of digital media technology through mobile and social media.
- Develop a suite of new media products that can be easily deployed by language services based on market consumption data, with an eye toward maximizing opportunities for user generated content, peer-to-peer sharing, and audience interactivity.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: INCREASE AUDIENCE INTERACTION VIA SOCIAL MEDIA**

Digital Engagement Impact Index	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	Systematic, automated collection of social media data to establish baselines.	System for automated collection of social media data rolled out in Q4 FY 2014.	Establish baselines.	Set targets during FY 2017 budget formulation.
MBN				
RFE/RL				
RFA				
OCB				

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: INCREASE SHARING OF BBG PROGRAMMING**

Percent of weekly audience who shared something heard/read/seen on broadcaster weekly	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
VOA	Establish baselines.	54	54	55
MBN (Radio Sawa)		NA	NA	NA
MBN (Alhurra)		NA	NA	NA
RFE/RL		48	50	55
RFA		55	55	58
OCB		NA	NA	NA

Note: Baselines for this measure are based on a very small sample of countries—mainly those surveyed in 2013/2014.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 1: TRANSFORM THE BBG INTO AN AGILE AND COST-EFFECTIVE ENTERPRISE, RESPONSIVE TO RAPID GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE AND ONGOING FISCAL CONSTRAINTS**

By virtue of historical circumstance, today’s BBG is a complex amalgam of diverse media outlets and respective support organizations, operating under different legal and administrative frameworks. The result is an

organization lacking the agility essential to operate in a rapidly evolving global media environment and the standardization that enables rational resource allocations. Going forward, the Agency must undergo rapid and

fundamental transformation in order to appropriately fulfill its charter amidst growing geo-political instability and substantial budgetary challenges.

- Restructure Agency management by appointing an Agency-wide CEO to manage the Agency’s day-to-day operations, with a part-time board of directors focused on strategy, budget, and public outreach.
- Enhance the Agency’s technological platforms and workflows enabling it to continually adapt to global

standards in content acquisition, manipulation, distribution, and audience consumption behaviors.

- Transform workplace and increase collaboration by leveraging open space concepts.
- Make innovation a core value of how we work and interface with audiences and other stakeholders.
- Automate and streamline business processes and work flows.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: RESTRUCTURE AGENCY MANAGEMENT**

	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target
Pursue CEO appointment	Engage CEO search firm	CEO selected	Hire CEO

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: ENHANCE THE AGENCY’S TECHNOLOGICAL POSTURE**

	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Execute seamless transition to Internet and fiber optic content distribution to stations and uplinks	All owned satellite uplinks fed via global MPLS network.	MPLS infrastructure put in place to facilitate satellite optimization. MPLS has replaced leased fiber optic cables. 80% of owned uplink facilities have MPLS connectivity.	100% of owned uplink facilities have MPLS connectivity. All satellite based circuits used for agency data (non-broadcast content) moved from satellite to terrestrial circuits. 15% of satellite-based distribution feeds transferred to terrestrial circuits.	40% of satellite-based distribution feeds transferred to terrestrial circuits.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 3: TRANSFORM WORKPLACE AND INCREASE COLLABORATION**

	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Leverage open space concepts	15% of total footprint	41% of total footprint	53% of total footprint	57% of total footprint

Note: 33% of the total footprint is technical space not suitable for open space concepts, e.g., conference rooms, data rooms, and broadcasting studios.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 4: AUTOMATE AND STREAMLINE KEY BUSINESS PROCESSES**

	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Complete business process reengineering and automation of business and media workflows	Automate Time and Attendance system;  Complete analysis of Financial, HR and Payroll systems integration	Automated Time and Attendance system has been delayed due to unavailability of funds;  Analysis of Financial, HR and Payroll systems on track for completion in FY 2014 and completed in Q1 FY 2015	Automate Time and Attendance system;  Integrate Financial, HR, Payroll, and Time and Attendance systems;  Automate invoice submission and processing	Integrate Procure to Pay into Momentum; Standardized annual procurement planning;  End-to-end high definition video workflows

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 2: LEVERAGE AND HARMONIZE AGENCY ASSETS AND BRANDS**

The BBG is one of the world’s largest news-gathering and reporting enterprises with more than 80 language services, 50 overseas news bureaus, 4,000 employees, and 1,500 stringer reporters. Each of the Agency’s five broadcasters generates original reporting every day from and around the world’s hotspots – the Sahel and Central Africa, Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, Burma, China, Egypt, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria, Yemen, et al – primarily in vernacular languages for target audiences in these areas. Too little of this rich content is translated and

shared across the BBG to augment international news coverage for other BBG vernacular services or made available to other global audiences in English. BBG will remedy this by facilitating coordination between broadcast entities and reinforcing their unique and respective mission-driven legislated roles in areas served by multiple broadcasters.

- Ensure coordinated and complementary mission-driven operations and content served by two BBG media entities.

- Build the internal content-sharing network, aligning internal editorial support and coordination, as needed.
- Channel original reporting from the language services to the central newsrooms and across the BBG to get maximum mileage out of the content we currently produce.
- Harmonize news gathering, including stringer and correspondent networks, across the BBG to ensure required editorial coordination and avoid redundancy.
- Use our coordinated news gathering and reporting structures as assets to provide affiliates with greater value, through interactive segments and other special offerings.
- Research and develop translation capacities, partnering, as appropriate, with outside organizations to access expertise and resources, as needed.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: DEVELOP COORDINATED STRATEGIES, OPERATIONAL PLANS, AND BUDGETS FOR BBG LANGUAGE SERVICES IN COUNTRIES/REGIONS SERVED BY MORE THAN ONE NETWORK**

	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Establish shared strategies, operational plans, and budgets; enter evidence into SMART (Strategic Management and Audience Research Tool)	Eurasian markets served by VOA and RFE/RL	Shared strategies and plans for Iran, Ukraine, Caucasus, and Balkans	Asian markets served by VOA and RFA	Continue language service integration and coordination

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: INCREASE THE QUANTITY OF ORIGINAL REPORTING SHARED ACROSS LANGUAGE SERVICES**

	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Share content across language services	Establish baseline for shared content on common systems (Pangea, Direct, Dalet, and News Share)	Various systems in place for sharing among language services and entities (e.g., News Share, VOA Insights, RFE/RL Editorial Agenda)	Build tracking mechanisms into existing systems and establish baseline for shared content	Increase sharing of content

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND PRODUCTIVITY

Our diverse, multi-cultural, and multi-talented workforce offers a rich range of experience and expertise to carry out the Agency’s mission. Key to success in a rapidly changing, highly competitive global media environment is flexibility to develop innovative products for our target countries consistent with emerging priorities, programming formats, and advances in technology. Enhanced skill sets are required to program for and transmit via multiple media platforms – radio, TV, Internet, mobile, and though social media. Our employees are most effective when they are well motivated, trained, and led. Continued efforts to equip and energize the entire BBG workforce are critical as we confront mounting competitive pressures worldwide.

- Promote human capital planning and management as a top priority for senior executives, managers, and supervisors throughout the agency.
- Consistently communicate organizational goals, objectives, priorities, and performance expectations in a timely manner to staff at all levels in the agency.
- Ensure a safe and secure work environment for all employees.
- Implement manager training curriculum focusing on performance management, human capital planning and processes, communication, and financial and administrative management.
- Improve the consistency and credibility of agency performance management processes.
- Develop cross-training and internal development standards and procedures, as applicable.
- Foster employee participation in agency health and wellness programs.

### PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: IMPROVE PERFORMANCE CULTURE OF AGENCY

Results-oriented performance culture index (from Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
BBG	46	46	46	44	46	48
Government-wide (for comparison)	52	51		51		

Results from the 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey are expected in September.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: IMPROVE EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Percentage of employees who believe that the workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals (from Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
BBG	53	55	55	53	55	57
Government-wide (for comparison)	72	70		69		

**PERFORMANCE GOAL 3: INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM**

Percentage of employees participating in Health and Wellness program (from Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
BBG	11	26	30	25	30	32

**REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

BBG has established long-term performance objectives based on regional priorities. The following highlights each of the performance objectives, recent accomplishments, proposed program changes and FY 2016 annual performance objectives.<sup>5</sup>

	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Audience (in millions)	29.3	30.0	27.0

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the accomplishments of each BBG broadcast network, please see the individual narratives in the preceding sections of this document.

## PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: REACH CRITICAL AUDIENCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

### Program Accomplishments

#### COVERED THE UNITED STATES AND U.S. POLICY

Alhurra and Radio Sawa ensure that the United States and its policies are accurately presented to the people of the Middle East. Their daily coverage provides policymakers a direct line of communication with audiences in the Middle East. MBN has full-time correspondents covering the White House, Congress, the Pentagon and the State Department. Their reports and coverage of key statements, speeches and hearings are featured daily.

#### COVERED ELECTIONS IN MIDDLE EAST

As voters went to the polls in Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, and Algeria, Alhurra and Radio Sawa provided context for people striving to effect economic, civil and political stability. Alhurra and Radio Sawa provided balanced coverage of the Egyptian constitutional referendum and presidential election, the Iraqi parliamentary elections, and the Algerian presidential elections.

#### PROVIDED A BALANCED SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT CRISES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Alhurra and Radio Sawa served as reliable sources of information during the unrest in the Middle East. Alhurra and Radio Sawa report from Gaza and Israel as well as feature reaction from the White House, the State Department and Congress. Since sectarian violence began to escalate in Iraq, Alhurra-Iraq and Radio Sawa have been a balanced source of news and information, with live reports from Kirkuk, Irbil and Mosul, for example. The Syrian civil war and resulting refugee crisis are covered daily by Alhurra and Radio Sawa.

#### DEVELOPED ORIGINAL CONTENT OF INTEREST TO AUDIENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Alhurra continued its commitment to develop original content from the region, connecting with its viewers through original programs like *Rayheen ala Fain (Where do we go from here?)* and *Street Pulse*. The critically acclaimed *Rayheen ala Fain* tackles difficult social issues such as sexual harassment, women's rights, jobs and education.

### Notable Program Changes

The FY 2016 Budget proposes an investment to counter the ISIL narrative with engaging programming from MBN and VOA Kurdish and Turkish through two core actions: being a platform for moderate secular and religious voices in

shaping the future of Iraq, and delegitimizing ISIL and other extremists in the region and potential foreign fighters abroad.

The FY 2016 Budget proposes offsetting FY 2016 operational costs with MBN recoveries from prior year obligations to

reduce the request for new obligational authority.

**FY 2016 Performance Objectives**

Establish new regional production facility in UAE to provide a rapid response platform for BBG coverage of the Middle East.

Build mobile and social media audiences in the Middle East and North Africa by producing original content targeted to emerging news audiences.

	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Audience (in millions)	59.1	61.6	62.8

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: EXPAND AUDIENCE REACH IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA AND EURASIA

**Program Accomplishments**

**OFFERING CONTENT NOT AVAILABLE ON RUSSIAN STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA**

In October 2014, RFE/RL and VOA launched *Current Time*, a joint production undertaken in partnership with public and private broadcasters and Internet portals in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Ukraine. Drawing on a network of reporters in the region, European capitals, and Washington, D.C., it presents a daily, 30-minute mix of live news coverage, interviews, original features, and political satire. Targeting Russian-language television audiences in countries neighboring Russia as well as digital audiences in Russia and around the world, it offers content that is not otherwise available on state-controlled Russian media to provide a "reality check" on local events.

**INCREASED COVERAGE OF UKRIANE**

In response to events in Ukraine, VOA and RFE/RL ramped up Ukrainian coverage and added new programs. More than twenty percent of adults consume BBG content weekly. Innovative use of live streaming technologies to report from the scene resulted in the unprecedented growth of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service website -- culminating in more than one million visits on three consecutive days (February 18-20, 2014), and a peak on February 20 of over 1.5 million visits.

**RESPONDING TO RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA**

To refute Kremlin influence in the Russian-language media space, RFE/RL and VOA have expanded programming to the Russian periphery. In May, VOA Ukrainian launched *Studio Washington*,

a daily Russian-language television newscast aimed at curtailing Kremlin disinformation and focusing on the U.S. and Western response to Moscow's aggression against Ukraine.

#### **CROSS-USIM CONTENT & PROGRAM STREAM HARMONIZATION**

VOA and RFE/RL are harmonizing the content and program streams of their common language services. In January, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service began running three of VOA's Azerbaijani Service programs on its Azatliqradiosu TV satellite stream on Hotbird. In April, RFE/RL's Georgian Service (Radio Tavisupleba) ramped up its radio programming to 18 hours daily via FM affiliate Radio Green Wave, including content from RFE/RL's Georgian Service, Ekho Kavkaza (Russian language to Georgia) unit, Russian Service, Armenian Service and Azerbaijani Service, as well as VOA's Georgian Service, Special English Service and Music Mix. In July, RFE/RL's Armenian Service began

harmonizing Web content with VOA's Armenian Service.

#### **COVERING AFGHANISTAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan joined with state broadcaster RTA to sponsor two presidential candidate debates in Kabul in February. Eight of the 11 registered candidates took part in the debates with an RFE/RL moderator. VOA provided wall-to-wall coverage of the runoff election in Afghanistan, including an exclusive interview with outgoing President Hamid Karzai.

#### **EXPANDED AUDIENCES IN IRAN**

VOA television programs to Iran are watched weekly by 24 percent of the adult population, making VOA Persian the leading international broadcaster in Iran. Radio Farda's incisive coverage on the Web and social media helped the Service reach significant new audiences in 2013 and 2014, with the number of its Facebook "likes" exceeding 1.3 million.

### **Notable Program Changes**

#### **COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING RUSSIAN AUDIENCES**

The FY 2016 Budget proposes an investment in RFE/RL to pursue a comprehensive strategy for engaging Russian-speaking audiences both within Russia and around the world.

#### **REDUCED RADIO TRANSMISSION AND ENDING SERVICES IN AVAR, CIRCASSIAN AND MACEDONIAN**

The FY 2016 Budget proposes minor reductions to transmissions (RFE/RL Belarusian, VOA Afghan, and VOA Pashto) and language services (VOA Afghan) and ending service in several languages (RFE/RL Avar, RFE/RL Circassian, and RFE/RL Macedonian) in accordance with Administration policy and public messaging and global engagement strategy.

**FY 2016 PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

**REFUTE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA**

Provide solid journalism on television and social media to refute propaganda in Russia and the surrounding regions.

**INCREASE COORDINATION BETWEEN VOA AND RFE/RL**

Leverage the newsgathering assets of VOA and RFE/RL and increase coordination in countries where both networks broadcast.

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: FOCUS BROADCASTING TO AUDIENCES OF STRATEGIC PRIORITY IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA**

	<b>FY 2014 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2015 Target</b>	<b>FY 2016 Target</b>
Audience (in millions)	47.1	47.6	47.9

**Program Accomplishments**

**INCREASED PROGRAMMING TO THAILAND**

When the Thai military suspended radio and TV broadcasts in May, VOA Thai started a daily, live 30-minute satellite radio-on-TV and webcast, and ramped up its efforts on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Engaged users on Facebook soared from the usual 2,000 people per week to more than 25,000 per week during the crisis.

**ESTABLISHED NEWS BUREAU IN YANGON**

VOA established an official news bureau in Yangon in January, posting its first full-time Burmese correspondent there in May. VOA Burmese also expanded production of its 30-minute television news program to go live seven days a week with placement on a national channel.

**COVERAGE CITED IN NORTH KOREAN STATE MEDIA**

South Korea’s TV Chosun channel reports that the North Korean state media cite VOA Korean reports more than any other foreign news media.

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON OPERATIONAL SAFETY AT CHINESE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS**

Despite increased security measures across China in ahead of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, RFA’s Cantonese Service concluded a six-month undercover investigation into operational safety at nuclear power plants in Guangdong, China’s most populous province. A two-part multimedia report based on the investigation will air in September.

**LEADING NEWS COVERAGE OF UYGHUR ETHNIC VIOLENCE**

In response to increased ethnic violence in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), RFA’s Uyghur Service was at the forefront of breaking news in the region.

increase in a little more than a year -- making it the second most popular Khmer-language page on the social media site.

**GROWTH IN KHMER SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

VOA Khmer’s Facebook page reached 500,000 fans in March – a 10-fold

**INDONESIAN AUDIENCE GROWTH**  
VOA Indonesian’s audience share has soared to more than 33 million adults per week – 18.9 percent of the Indonesian adult population.

**Notable Program Changes**

The FY 2016 Budget proposes reducing transmission (for VOA Burmese and VOA Khmer) and language services (VOA Indonesian), eliminating language services (VOA Lao), closing RFA’s

Bangkok office in accordance with Administration policy and public messaging and global engagement strategy.

**FY 2016 Performance Objectives**

Expand video and digital initiatives for Burma, Cambodia and Vietnam as well as social media outreach inside the Chinese firewall.

Leverage the newsgathering assets of VOA and RFA, and increase coordination in countries where both networks broadcast

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: REACH NEW AUDIENCES WITH INCREASED ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA**

	<b>FY 2014 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2015 Target</b>	<b>FY 2016 Target</b>
Audience (in millions)	51.0	51.0	53.0

**Program Accomplishments**

**hments**

VOA Hausa continued its ground-breaking journalism with coverage of the terrorist insurgency in and around Nigeria. This year, a VOA Hausa reporter spent four weeks traveling through some of the most dangerous areas in

Nigeria the epicenter of Boko Haram -- providing multimedia coverage of major stories, including the abduction of more than 200 school girls by Boko Haram. During the past year, VOA Hausa has become the single most popular service

in VOA's digital portfolio, averaging more than four million visits per month.

Responding to the crisis in the Central African Republic, this past year, VOA launched two 10-minute daily broadcasts in Sango on its FM station in the capital, Bangui. VOA French to Africa also broadcasts on the stream, adding local content in five daily news breaks during morning drive hours.

When civil strife erupted in South Sudan, VOA increased its broadcasting to the region, adding 10 on-the-scene reporters in strife-torn locations across the country. VOA launched a targeted FM radio stream in Juba that carries news about South Sudan, interactive daily segments on a variety of topics, public service announcements, and other specialized news and entertainment.

VOA Somali continues to be a reliable source of information in the troubled Horn of Africa region, where over 40 percent of adults cite VOA as one of

their leading sources of information, and more than half of the population (51 percent) listens to VOA weekly.

A year after launching its first-ever Bambara language radio show for audiences in Mali, the Voice of America added a new call-in program, Anba Fo (We'll Say It). The hour-long weekly radio show airs Saturday evenings on VOA's owned-and-operated FM station in Bamako, as well as online. Each episode addresses a topic critical to audiences in Mali, such as security and stability, education, women's rights and youth unemployment.

Given the rise of insurgency and civil conflict in Africa, VOA established a partnership with a leading independent Nigerian television station. This means that VOA correspondents can file live reports on one of the country's most popular private stations, reaching approximately a 15 percent audience share of viewers over age 15.

### **Notable Program Changes**

This FY 2016 Budget request proposes eliminating language services (VOA Kinyarwanda and VOA Kirundi) and reducing language services (VOA Zimbabwe Service) in accordance with Administration policy and public messaging and global engagement strategy.

This FY 2016 Budget request proposes to merge the VOA Creole service into the French to Africa service as it is a better cultural and linguistic fit than the within the VOA Latin America Division.

### **FY 2016 Performance Objectives**

Provide compelling local content for FM audiences in Africa.

Develop video content focused on countering violent extremism and

targeting youth in Hausa, French, Swahili, Somali and English for distribution on satellite, affiliates, online and mobile in Africa.

## PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: EXPAND AUDIENCE REACH IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA.

### Program Accomplishments

During the past two years, OCB has doubled the number of news reports it produces in Cuba. The Martis have assembled the largest network of independent journalists working in the country. These journalists file reports (which include audio, text, video and photos) from across Cuba via telephone, SMS and Internet.

Since February, when protesters in Venezuela were met with violent resistance by government forces, audiences have come to rely on VOA reports that air on TV affiliates throughout the region for accurate and balanced accounts of the protests and the government's response. VOA supports its affiliates beyond merely providing content; it has teamed with Radio Free Asia to share Internet

circumvention tools with affiliates to counter the Venezuelan government's crackdown on independent media and influential social networks.

In May, OCB launched *Reporta Cuba*, a Martí effort that empowers Cubans to communicate and engage through new media. *Reporta Cuba* is a network of citizen reporters – students, independent journalists, activists, dissidents and regular citizens – who share information with OCB via SMS, MMS and email from their mobile phones and computers. *Reporta Cuba* helps Cubans use available tools to disseminate information and report what they experience, without censorship.

### Notable Program Changes

The FY 2016 Budget for the BBG begins the process of establishing a new de-federalized Spanish language international media organization that

would consist of the present OCB and Voice of America Latin American division, Spanish Language service

### FY 2016 Performance Objectives

Begin the process to establish a new de-federalized Spanish language international media organization that

would consist of the present OCB and VOA Latin American division, excluding the Creole service.

## PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: ALIGN ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS WITH BROADCASTING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE GOALS

### Program Accomplishments

The Agency's Internet Anti-Censorship (IAC) team countered Internet censorship in 13 countries and supported 21 BBG language services. The team continued the expanded use of a mobile application for Android devices that incorporates a social news reader, social reporter to accept user-generated content, and real-time chat functionality targeted at users in Iran.

To reduce telecommunications costs and move toward a more flexible and advanced global delivery data network, TSI completed the first phase of the Agency's migration from dedicated transoceanic satellite and fiber circuits to the more flexible and less expensive digital Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) circuits. In FY 2014, TSI connected two major BBG distribution hubs located in the Philippines and Germany to the Agency's global MPLS network.

The Office of Strategy and Development conducted media training for hundreds of journalists around the world, including in South Sudan, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Burundi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, South Africa, Indonesia, Jamaica and Bangladesh. OSD worked

with reporters, editors and news managers to encourage professionalism and an understanding of the vital role of media in democracy.

The ODDI Digital Services team worked closely with the OSD Marketing team to develop a new platform for the BBG's global affiliates and digital partners around the world. The new BBG Direct features video and audio content from all five broadcast entities and offers affiliates a streamlined, cost-effective way to receive broadcast-quality USIM programming to distribute on-air and online to local audiences.

The IBB is leading a comprehensive reform of agency acquisitions. In collaboration with VOA, staff in the Director's Office and the Office of Contracts issued a solicitation that will create a new structure for acquiring contract staff to support VOA and OCB programming. This will streamline the administrative processes required for these contractors and significantly reduce the administrative burden for a significant portion of the agency's workforce.

### Notable Program Changes

The FY 2016 Budget includes investments for continued migration to audience-preferred platforms.

The FY 2016 Budget includes administrative reductions across the Agency.

## FY 2016 Performance Objectives

- Realign BBG transmissions to maximize the effectiveness of program delivery resources.
- Provide cutting-edge circumvention tools to audiences and independent media outlets in countries that restrict and censor Internet access.
- Provide enterprise-wide technical support for digital and social media innovation.
- Build strong and collaborative relationships with affiliate partners in target markets.
- Use research to identify appropriate target audiences and their preferred media, with the formats and content that appeal to them.
- Maintain the firewall and continuously monitor programming quality in line with modern broadcast journalism principles through annual performance reviews of all broadcast services.
- Support initiatives to improve financial, performance and budget integration as well as financial and acquisition processes.
- Carry out BBG's mission and goals with a workforce that is agile, skilled, diverse, well-led and motivated.
- Address BBG's most critical infrastructure maintenance and repair requirements.

## DIGITAL MEDIA METRICS

The Internet and other forms of digital media are key delivery platforms for BBG broadcasts in many media markets. The BBG collects and analyzes various metrics to understand how audiences use these platforms to access and share news and information. While Internet access varies widely across the BBG broadcast regions, the digital media metrics presented on the following pages illustrate the impact of digital media efforts through the average

number of weekly visits, pages per visit and visitors to BBG language service websites during fiscal year 2014. These metrics do not include most traffic to proxy servers, which can be significant in areas where Internet access is censored or restricted. These numbers also do not capture the further distribution of digital content through online social networks or word-of-mouth.

Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Digital Media Metrics  
FY 2014 - FY 2016

Language Service	Average Weekly Visits FY 2014	Average Pages/Visit 2014	Average Weekly Visitors FY2014
<b>Voice of America</b>			
<b>Africa Division</b>			
Central Africa (Kinyarwanda, Kirundi)	7,400	2.5	3,800
French to Africa	7,800	2.1	6,400
Hausa	698,700	3.1	226,400
Horn of Africa (Amharic, Tigrigna, Afan Oromo)	176,500	2.8	71,900
Portuguese to Africa	24,900	2.4	16,400
Somali	131,500	2.4	47,400
Swahili	7,300	2.8	5,400
Zimbabwe (Shona, Ndebele, English)	15,000	2.4	9,500
<b>East Asia &amp; Pacific Division</b>			
Burmese	165,600	2.7	69,100
Cantonese	5,600	1.9	4,400
Indonesian	123,400	1.6	102,300
Khmer (Khmer & English)	102,000	2.6	61,000
Korean	31,300	2.2	24,100
Lao	13,900	3.6	6,900
Mandarin	374,700	2.8	180,800
Thai	11,700	1.6	10,200
Tibetan (Tibetan & English)	19,800	3.1	9,000
Vietnamese	448,800	3.0	201,500
<b>Eurasian Division</b>			
Albanian	23,400	2.4	13,300
Armenian	2,600	2.9	1,400
Bosnian	4,100	2.1	3,300
Georgian	5,000	2.0	4,100
Russian	513,200	2.5	325,100
Serbian	8,100	2.2	6,200
Ukrainian	188,200	1.3	144,200
<b>Latin America Division</b>			
Creole	1,500	3.2	800
Spanish	94,300	1.5	79,400
<b>South Asia Division</b>			
Afghanistan Service (Dari & Pashto)	57,600	2.2	29,600
Radio Deewa (Pashto)	5,600	3.1	3,100
Azerbaijani	8,200	2.3	5,900
Bangla	4,900	2.5	3,600
Kurdish	5,400	2.3	3,500
Kurdi	2,400	2.7	1,600
Turkish	19,900	1.8	16,800
Urdu	54,500	2.9	28,600
Uzbek	12,500	2.9	6,500

Notes: Numbers do not include some proxy visits. Between FY 2013 and FY 2014, the BBG acquired and began to use a new web analytics tool. These numbers are provisional based on the initial configuration of the new analytics tool, and cannot be compared with previous reports, which were measured using a different analytics tool and setup. The new configuration was audited, and determined to have some technical flaws in setup which may affect the numbers collected. These are currently being addressed, but the outcome of the changes is unknown. If this or subsequent corrections to the configuration change the numbers significantly, we will note in future updates or years of this chart. MBN numbers are from the legacy analytics tool.

<b>Language Service</b>	<b>Average Weekly Visits FY 2014</b>	<b>Average Pages/Visit 2014</b>	<b>Average Weekly Visitors FY2014</b>
<b>VOA Persian</b>	591,900	2.2	215,800
<b>Worldwide English</b>	808,200	1.7	654,600
<b>Learning English</b>	256,100	3.0	148,500
<b>Office of Cuba Broadcasting</b>			
Radio & TV Marti	75,000	2.3	50,400
<b>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty</b>			
Armenian (Armenian & Russian)	130,400	2.3	54,900
Azerbaijani (Azerbaijani & Russian)	180,600	2.3	97,800
Balkans (Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian, Montenegro, Albanian, Croatian)	154,600	1.9	100,900
Belarusan	59,700	2.7	25,500
Georgian (Georgian & Russian)	68,200	1.9	45,700
Kazakh (Kazakh & Russian)	108,100	2.3	71,100
Kyrgyz (Kyrgyz & Russian)	151,000	3.5	60,400
Moldovan	21,900	1.8	15,400
North Caucasus	2,500	2.6	1,400
Radio Farda (Persian)	1,245,200	2.1	412,000
Radio Free Afghanistan (Dari, Pashto, English)	98,200	2.4	39,500
Radio Mashaal (Pashto to Pakistan)	14,200	2.1	7,900
Russian	887,200	1.9	504,300
Tajik (Tajik & Russian)	995,100	2.0	543,800
Tatar-Bashkir	161,000	3.3	49,500
Turkmen	19,200	3.0	8,700
Ukrainian (including Crimean Websites)	1,885,300	1.7	859,800
Uzbek	360,500	3.9	99,300
<b>Radio Free Asia</b>			
Burmese	66,000	2.1	25,400
Cambodian	218,800	2.3	87,000
Cantonese	9,900	1.9	7,900
Korean	23,100	2.5	17,300
Laotian	14,600	3.3	7,200
Mandarin	91,600	2.9	55,800
Tibetan	12,000	2.5	4,600
Uyghur	17,800	3.7	6,600
Vietnamese	445,100	2.4	207,000
<b>Middle East Broadcasting Networks</b>			
Alhurra	147,200	1.7	126,100
Radio Sawa	243,000	1.5	215,000

Notes: Numbers do not include some proxy visits. Between FY 2013 and FY 2014, the BBG acquired and began to use a new web analytics tool. These numbers are provisional based on the initial configuration of the new analytics tool, and cannot be compared with previous reports, which were measured using a different analytics tool and setup. The new configuration was audited, and determined to have some technical flaws in setup which may affect the numbers collected. These are currently being addressed, but the outcome of the changes is unknown. If this or subsequent corrections to the configuration change the numbers significantly, we will note in future updates or years of this chart. MBN numbers are from the legacy analytics tool.

## PERFORMANCE BUDGET APPENDIX: INFORMATION ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This section explains the main performance indicators that BBG has used historically, and the verification and validation of these indicators. The performance goals contained in this annual performance plan use these indicators, along with new milestones and indicators. BBG will continue to refine these indicators and develop appropriate verification and validation procedures for them. A full description of all BBG performance indicators can be found in the Agency's Performance and Accountability Report (PAR), available on the BBG website ([www.bbg.gov](http://www.bbg.gov)).

### **Measured Weekly Audiences**

This indicator measures the number of people in target areas listening to or viewing BBG programming or online materials on a weekly basis. The measure is obtained for each language service (except Spanish-to-Cuba, Korean, Uyghur, and Tibetan) and for the countries served by the BBG that were surveyed within the past five years. It is based upon the measurement of the "regular listening audience," a statistical standard long used to report international radio audience reach. Regular listening or viewing audience (radio, TV or Internet) has over the years been consistently defined as all adults listening or viewing at least once a week, as determined by an audience survey that has an adequately designed sample. We do not conduct surveys in every country every year, so reach figures may in some cases reflect weekly reach measures collected from up to five years

in the past. This may result in an over or underestimation of actual reach. Additionally, political volatility in certain markets may prevent the measurement of current reach for services broadcasting to these areas.

### **Program Credibility**

This indicator is determined by the survey question about trustworthiness of news and information of those sampled respondents who listened to or viewed each station at least once a week. The answers are registered on a four-point scale – Trust a great deal, Trust it somewhat, Do not trust it very much, Do not trust it at all. The credibility index is the percent of those answering the question in the survey (excluding those who did not respond or did not know) who endorsed trust a great deal or somewhat. Credibility estimates are not included for countries where the number of regular listeners/viewers/online users is so small ( $n = <50$ ) that the estimate is unreliable.

### **Understanding of Current Events**

This indicator is determined by the survey question asking weekly listeners/viewers/online users of [language] whether the broadcasts have "increased their understanding of current events." The answers are registered on a four-point scale – a great deal, somewhat, very little, or not at all. The understanding indicator measures the percent of those answering the question in the survey (excluding those who did not respond or did not know) who chose "a great deal" or "somewhat."

## **Affiliations**

Affiliates are a primary gatekeeper between the BBG networks and their end users – the audiences that listen, watch, and read their content online, on mobile and by broadcast outlets.

Counting the number of affiliates, then, offers a measure of the appeal of the programming to these vital gatekeepers and distributors of the BBG networks' content. As shortwave usage wanes in parts of the world, the importance of affiliations with local medium wave and FM radio and television stations grows. With the growth of digital and mobile technology, there are new forms of affiliations, including online and mobile. In FY 2013, the BBG changed its methodology for counting affiliates.

This stemmed, in part, from an upgrade to its affiliate database to promote better communication with affiliates, as well as the growing importance of digital outlets. Where previously only high impact, high quality radio and TV affiliates with signed contracts were tallied, the affiliation indicator now counts all stations or outlets that regularly retransmit content from BBG networks.

## **Verification and Validation of Indicators**

The performance indicators are a best effort to measure each broadcast network's level of performance and to project how effective they will be in FY 2014 and FY 2015. To achieve maximum objectivity, measurements are performed independently of the elements being evaluated. VOA, OCB, RFE/RL, RFA and MBN audience research is carried out by an outside research contractor, currently Gallup. The appropriate network research director computes network-wide performance values, and sends them to the BBG research manager for verification.

The standards of the Conference of International Broadcasting Audience Researchers and other standards-setting organizations are followed for the design and conduct of sample surveys. A technical report is produced for every survey, which describes the sampling plan, the problems encountered in the field, and the methods of resolution. These standards are being improved to allow computation of margins of error that will include design effects, where feasible.





# Appendix Attachment A: Budget Charts

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Voice of America (VOA)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

Voice of America	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
<b>VOA Director</b>	<b>\$ 8,636</b>	<b>\$ 10,102</b>	<b>\$ 9,493</b>
<b>Associate Director, Operations</b>			
Associate Director of Operations	\$ 1,431	\$ 3,440	\$ 3,349
Central Production Services Division	\$ 13,505	\$ 11,322	\$ 10,612
Radio and Multimedia Operations	\$ 0	\$ 1,729	\$ 1,729
Operations Support Division	\$ 21,355	\$ 20,672	\$ 20,999
Technical Support Division	\$ 9,180	\$ 8,801	\$ 8,582
<b>Total, Associate Director, Operations</b>	<b>\$ 45,471</b>	<b>\$ 45,964</b>	<b>\$ 45,271</b>
<b>Associate Director, Language Programming</b>	<b>\$ 5,039</b>	<b>\$ 5,347</b>	<b>\$ 5,526</b>
<b>Africa Division</b>			
Division Chief	\$ 2,309	\$ 4,061	\$ 3,953
Bambara Service	\$ 83	\$ 232	\$ 297
Central Africa (Kinyarwanda, Kirundi)	\$ 1,622	\$ 934	\$ 500
French To Africa Service	\$ 2,504	\$ 3,091	\$ 3,675
French to Trans Sahel / Central African Republic	\$ 0	\$ 370	\$ 370
Hausa Service	\$ 2,214	\$ 2,392	\$ 2,717
Horn Of Africa (Amharic, Tigrigna, Afaan Oromoo)	\$ 2,257	\$ 2,503	\$ 2,422
Portuguese Service	\$ 1,051	\$ 1,596	\$ 1,619
Somali Service	\$ 1,584	\$ 1,763	\$ 2,047
Swahili Service	\$ 1,319	\$ 1,325	\$ 1,599
Zimbabwe/Shona/Ndebele/English	\$ 1,275	\$ 540	\$ 389
<b>Total, Africa Division</b>	<b>\$ 16,218</b>	<b>\$ 18,807</b>	<b>\$ 19,588</b>
<b>East Asia &amp; Pacific Division</b>			
Division Chief	\$ 1,898	\$ 1,613	\$ 1,309
Burmese Service	\$ 2,405	\$ 2,968	\$ 3,089
Cantonese Service	\$ 978	\$ 1,113	\$ 1,114
Indonesian Service	\$ 5,591	\$ 5,793	\$ 4,920
Khmer Service	\$ 1,902	\$ 2,036	\$ 2,226
Korean Service	\$ 2,659	\$ 2,763	\$ 2,846
Lao Service	\$ 693	\$ 774	\$ 390
Mandarin Service	\$ 11,234	\$ 11,918	\$ 12,243
Thai Service	\$ 683	\$ 873	\$ 914
Tibetan Service	\$ 3,224	\$ 3,362	\$ 3,327
Vietnamese Service	\$ 1,524	\$ 1,806	\$ 2,045
<b>Total, East Asia &amp; Pacific Division</b>	<b>\$ 32,791</b>	<b>\$ 35,019</b>	<b>\$ 34,423</b>
<b>Eurasia Division</b>			
Division Chief	\$ 941	\$ 1,161	\$ 1,042
Albanian Service	\$ 1,869	\$ 1,482	\$ 1,288
Armenian Service	\$ 528	\$ 461	\$ 524
Bosnian Service	\$ 956	\$ 1,380	\$ 1,305
Georgian Service	\$ 603	\$ 564	\$ 568
Russian Service	\$ 3,844	\$ 4,090	\$ 4,143
Serbian Service	\$ 1,451	\$ 1,137	\$ 1,125
Ukrainian Service	\$ 1,384	\$ 1,742	\$ 1,683
<b>Total, Eurasia Division</b>	<b>\$ 11,576</b>	<b>\$ 12,017</b>	<b>\$ 11,678</b>

\*NOTE 1: LatAm is illustrated along with OCB in a consolidated Spanish language grantee CBJ for 2016

\*NOTE 2: VOA Macedonia does not have any additional funding planned in the FY 2015 BBG Program Plan.  
VOA Macedonia had \$603K-FY 2014 and \$413K- FY 2015)

\*NOTE 3: VOA Greece was discontinued in FY 2014 with a funding level \$372K

<b>Voice of America</b>	<b>FY 2014 Actuals</b>	<b>FY 2015 Program Plan</b>	<b>FY 2016 Request</b>
<b>Latin America Division</b>			
Division Chief	\$ 564	\$ 1,078	\$ 0
Creole Service	\$ 1,199	\$ 1,183	\$ 1,279
Spanish Service	\$ 3,027	\$ 2,689	\$ 0
Production Unit	\$ 409	\$ 0	\$ 0
<b>Total, Latin America Division</b>	<b>\$ 5,199</b>	<b>\$ 4,950</b>	<b>\$ 1,279</b>
<b>South Asia Division</b>			
Division Chief (South Asia + NECA)	\$ 2,673	\$ 2,197	\$ 2,160
Afghanistan Service	\$ 1,930	\$ 1,861	\$ 1,852
Dari	\$ 2,410	\$ 2,601	\$ 1,786
Pashto	\$ 2,368	\$ 2,579	\$ 1,765
VOA Radio Deewa (Pashto)	\$ 2,957	\$ 2,851	\$ 2,642
Azerbaijani Service	\$ 646	\$ 655	\$ 650
Bangla Service	\$ 1,105	\$ 1,175	\$ 1,159
Kurdish Service	\$ 1,642	\$ 2,458	\$ 2,665
Turkish Service	\$ 1,325	\$ 2,038	\$ 2,138
Urdu Service	\$ 3,034	\$ 4,416	\$ 4,382
Uzbek Service	\$ 664	\$ 650	\$ 680
<b>Total, South Asia Division</b>	<b>\$ 20,754</b>	<b>\$ 23,481</b>	<b>\$ 21,879</b>
<b>VOA Persian</b>	<b>\$ 15,133</b>	<b>\$ 13,756</b>	<b>\$ 13,674</b>
<b>English Division</b>			
Division Chief	\$ 700	\$ 768	\$ 759
English To Africa Service	\$ 3,521	\$ 4,196	\$ 4,409
All other programs	\$ 10,865	\$ 10,139	\$ 8,698
<b>Total, English Division</b>	<b>\$ 15,086</b>	<b>\$ 15,103</b>	<b>\$ 13,866</b>
<b>Central News</b>			
VOA Central News	\$ 15,464	\$ 18,926	\$ 21,504
Home Leave & Transfer (HLT)	\$ 240	\$ 212	\$ 212
<b>Total, Central News</b>	<b>\$ 15,704</b>	<b>\$ 19,138</b>	<b>\$ 21,716</b>
<b>Domestic Bureaus</b>			
Houston	\$ 188	\$ 186	\$ 182
Los Angeles	\$ 304	\$ 296	\$ 292
New York	\$ 900	\$ 831	\$ 816
<b>Total, Domestic Bureaus</b>	<b>\$ 1,392</b>	<b>\$ 1,313</b>	<b>\$ 1,290</b>
<b>Overseas Bureaus and News Centers</b>			
Bangkok	\$ 808	\$ 865	\$ 1,028
Beijing	\$ 790	\$ 681	\$ 671
Cairo	\$ 469	\$ 382	\$ 392
Dakar	\$ 278	\$ 309	\$ 312
Hong Kong	\$ 241	\$ 151	\$ 151
Islamabad	\$ 375	\$ 303	\$ 362
Jakarta	\$ 356	\$ 295	\$ 295
Jerusalem	\$ 500	\$ 386	\$ 0
Johannesburg	\$ 549	\$ 669	\$ 706
London	\$ 1,917	\$ 1,745	\$ 1,770
Moscow	\$ 316	\$ 356	\$ 357
Nairobi	\$ 370	\$ 393	\$ 402
New Delhi	\$ 217	\$ 0	\$ 0
Seoul	\$ 479	\$ 552	\$ 554
<b>Total, Overseas Bureaus</b>	<b>\$ 7,665</b>	<b>\$ 7,087</b>	<b>\$ 7,000</b>
<b>TOTAL, Voice of America</b>	<b>\$ 200,664</b>	<b>\$ 212,084</b>	<b>\$ 206,683</b>

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Office of Cuba Broadcasting<sup>1</sup> (OCB)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

Office of Cuba Broadcasting <sup>1</sup>	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
OCB Directorate and Advisory Board	\$ 799	\$ 1,135	\$ 1,135
Administration	\$ 3,625	\$ 3,955	\$ 3,955
Radio Marti	\$ 5,009	\$ 5,352	\$ 5,352
New Media	\$ 1,253	\$ 1,123	\$ 1,123
Central News	\$ 4,781	\$ 4,594	\$ 4,594
TV Marti	\$ 4,437	\$ 4,694	\$ 4,362
Technical Operations	\$ 3,474	\$ 3,101	\$ 2,934
Greenville Transmitting Station	\$ 2,186	\$ 2,351	\$ 2,850
Computer Services	\$ 1,128	\$ 825	\$ 825
Spanish Language International Media Grantee	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 3,191
<b>TOTAL, Office of Cuba Broadcasting<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$ 26,692</b>	<b>\$ 27,130</b>	<b>\$ 30,321</b>

<sup>1</sup> FY 2016 funding includes funds designated for OCB and VOA Latin America (minus Creole), which will join to form the Spanish Language International Media Grantee

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

International Broadcasting Bureau	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
Director, International Broadcasting Bureau			
<b>Total, Director, International Broadcasting Bureau</b>	<b>\$ 6,521</b>	<b>\$ 4,996</b>	<b>\$ 5,304</b>
Office of Chief Financial Officer			
<b>Total, Office of Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>\$ 12,291</b>	<b>\$ 10,579</b>	<b>\$ 10,646</b>
Office of Strategy and Development			
<b>Total, Office of Strategy and Development</b>	<b>\$ 19,132</b>	<b>\$ 13,671</b>	<b>\$ 13,698</b>
Office of Communications and External Affairs	\$ 1,440	\$ 1,830	\$ 1,746
Office of General Counsel	\$ 2,162	\$ 1,931	\$ 1,999
Office of Digital and Design Innovation	\$ 5,365	\$ 5,333	\$ 4,816
Office of Performance Review	\$ 3,769	\$ 2,174	\$ 1,927
Office of Research and Assessment	\$ 0	\$ 6,359	\$ 6,407
Office of Contracting and Procurement	\$ 3,805	\$ 3,237	\$ 3,233
Office of Human Resources	\$ 6,891	\$ 5,357	\$ 5,445
Office of Workforce Support and Development	\$ 0	\$ 1,611	\$ 1,830
Office of Civil Rights	\$ 1,119	\$ 1,092	\$ 1,088
Office of Policy	\$ 969	\$ 954	\$ 914
Office of Security	\$ 2,031	\$ 1,894	\$ 1,957
<b>TOTAL, International Broadcasting Bureau</b>	<b>\$ 65,495</b>	<b>\$ 61,018</b>	<b>\$ 61,010</b>

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
<b>Technology, Services, and Innovation Director</b>			
Director	\$ 211	\$ 216	\$ 215
Home Leave & Transfer (HLT)	\$ 121	\$ 348	\$ 375
<b>Total, Technology Services and Innovation Director</b>	<b>\$ 332</b>	<b>\$ 564</b>	<b>\$ 590</b>
<b>Office of the CIO</b>	<b>\$ 9,782</b>	<b>\$ 9,160</b>	<b>\$ 10,099</b>
Internet Freedom; Anti-Censorship	\$ 7,420	\$ 17,500	\$ 12,500
Global Networks Division	\$ 8,940	\$ 6,193	\$ 3,917
Satellites	\$ 16,228	\$ 20,539	\$ 16,093
<b>Total, Office of the CIO</b>	<b>\$ 42,370</b>	<b>\$ 53,392</b>	<b>\$ 42,609</b>
<b>Resource Directorate</b>	<b>\$ 2,688</b>	<b>\$ 3,004</b>	<b>\$ 2,792</b>
Facilities Management	\$ 39,396	\$ 33,274	\$ 40,562
<b>Total, Resource Directorate</b>	<b>\$ 42,084</b>	<b>\$ 36,278</b>	<b>\$ 43,354</b>
Information Technology Directorate	\$ 11,570	\$ 14,089	\$ 13,638
Technology Support Directorate	\$ 9,050	\$ 9,391	\$ 8,057
Engineering and Transmission Directorate	\$ 177	\$ 179	\$ 180
Broadcast Technologies Division	\$ 2,587	\$ 2,583	\$ 2,799
<b>Operations Division</b>	<b>\$ 2,350</b>	<b>\$ 2,487</b>	<b>\$ 1,355</b>
Leased Transmissions	\$ 9,620	\$ 6,762	\$ 8,975
FM Transmissions	\$ 226	\$ 928	\$ 9,258
Host Government Transmissions	\$ 368	\$ 393	\$ 387
Worldwide Procurement (WWP)	\$ 3,152	\$ 3,245	\$ 4,633
<b>Total, Operations Division</b>	<b>\$ 15,716</b>	<b>\$ 13,815</b>	<b>\$ 24,608</b>
<b>Stations Division</b>			
<b>Domestic Transmitting Stations</b>			
Tinian	\$ 6,629	\$ 6,590	\$ 6,605
<b>Total, Domestic Stations</b>	<b>\$ 6,629</b>	<b>\$ 6,590</b>	<b>\$ 6,605</b>
<b>Overseas Transmitting Stations</b>			
Afghanistan	\$ 3,283	\$ 3,602	\$ 2,468
Botswana	\$ 1,881	\$ 1,965	\$ 2,187
Germany	\$ 11,216	\$ 12,910	\$ 10,651
Kuwait	\$ 11,625	\$ 11,926	\$ 4,514
Philippines	\$ 6,734	\$ 6,196	\$ 4,534
Sao Tome	\$ 5,352	\$ 4,427	\$ 4,144
Sri Lanka	\$ 2,893	\$ 2,954	\$ 3,224
Thailand	\$ 3,409	\$ 3,214	\$ 3,345
<b>Total, Overseas Stations</b>	<b>\$ 46,393</b>	<b>\$ 47,194</b>	<b>\$ 35,067</b>
Monitoring Offices	\$ 1,030	\$ 1,034	\$ 1,079
<b>TOTAL, Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation</b>	<b>\$ 177,938</b>	<b>\$ 185,109</b>	<b>\$ 178,586</b>

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
<b>Programming Division</b>			
Director	\$ 2,083	\$ 2,286	\$ 2,479
Digital Response Team	\$ 0	\$ 1,059	\$ 2,686
Multimedia Strategy, Development and Training	\$ 1,356	\$ 1,650	\$ 2,706
Marketing & Affiliates	\$ 720	\$ 899	\$ 937
<b>Language Services</b>			
Armenian	\$ 1,747	\$ 1,489	\$ 1,545
Azerbaijani	\$ 1,887	\$ 2,168	\$ 3,105
Balkans (Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian, Albanian, Montenegrin, Croatian)	\$ 4,273	\$ 4,364	\$ 4,000
Belarusian	\$ 2,291	\$ 2,750	\$ 2,890
Georgian	\$ 2,222	\$ 2,323	\$ 2,400
Kazakh	\$ 1,676	\$ 1,759	\$ 1,837
Kyrgyz	\$ 1,722	\$ 1,809	\$ 1,890
Radio Farda (Persian)	\$ 6,967	\$ 7,234	\$ 7,454
Radio Free Afghanistan (Dari and Pashto)	\$ 4,965	\$ 5,563	\$ 5,562
Radio Mashaal (Pashto)	\$ 3,099	\$ 3,243	\$ 3,242
Regional Programming	\$ 0	\$ 2,350	\$ 6,496
Romanian to Moldova	\$ 1,237	\$ 1,505	\$ 1,660
Russian	\$ 6,675	\$ 7,149	\$ 7,396
North Caucasus Unit (Avar, Chechen and Circassian)	\$ 1,243	\$ 1,369	\$ 1,147
Tajik	\$ 1,603	\$ 1,678	\$ 1,739
Tatar-Bashkir	\$ 783	\$ 862	\$ 895
Turkmen	\$ 659	\$ 795	\$ 832
Ukrainian	\$ 3,028	\$ 3,471	\$ 3,761
Uzbek	\$ 1,505	\$ 1,630	\$ 1,698
News and Current Affairs	\$ 5,811	\$ 6,025	\$ 5,848
<b>Total, Programming Division</b>	<b>\$ 57,552</b>	<b>\$ 65,430</b>	<b>\$ 74,205</b>
Office of President	\$ 6,497	\$ 7,154	\$ 9,728
Technology Division	\$ 22,492	\$ 23,224	\$ 24,688
Finance Division	\$ 6,630	\$ 7,042	\$ 8,179
Istanbul Bureau Investment			\$ 0
<b>TOTAL, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)</b>	<b>\$ 93,171</b>	<b>\$ 102,850</b>	<b>\$ 116,800</b>

\*NOTE: Radio Free Iraq (RFI) has shifted to MBN in the FY 2015 Program Plan. Funding was \$2.089M – FY 2014 and \$1.0M – FY 2015

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Radio Free Asia (RFA)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

Radio Free Asia	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
<b>Programming Division</b>			
Executive Editor	\$ 2,732	\$ 2,863	\$ 2,813
<b>Program Services</b>			
Burmese Service	\$ 1,692	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,905
Cambodian Service	\$ 789	\$ 895	\$ 902
Cantonese Service	\$ 991	\$ 1,108	\$ 1,120
Korean Service	\$ 2,221	\$ 2,368	\$ 2,383
Laotian Service	\$ 1,143	\$ 1,138	\$ 1,156
Mandarin Service	\$ 4,513	\$ 4,730	\$ 4,949
Tibetan Service	\$ 3,888	\$ 4,078	\$ 4,155
Uyghur Service	\$ 1,208	\$ 1,326	\$ 1,413
Vietnamese Service	\$ 1,596	\$ 1,823	\$ 1,964
<b>Program Offices</b>			
Bangkok Office	\$ 242	\$ 233	\$ 0
Dharamsala Office	\$ 13	\$ 13	\$ 15
Hong Kong Office	\$ 466	\$ 417	\$ 376
Phnom Penh Office	\$ 446	\$ 504	\$ 565
Rangoon Office	\$ 0	\$ 532	\$ 219
Seoul Office	\$ 450	\$ 463	\$ 720
Taipei Office	\$ 122	\$ 131	\$ 136
Yangon	\$ 317	\$ 0	\$ 0
<b>Total, Programming Division</b>	<b>\$ 22,829</b>	<b>\$ 24,472</b>	<b>\$ 24,791</b>
Office of the President	\$ 519	\$ 895	\$ 858
Research, Training, and Evaluation	\$ 439	\$ 508	\$ 520
Open Technology Fund	\$ 10,193	\$ 0	\$ 0
Technical Operations	\$ 6,396	\$ 6,355	\$ 6,194
HQ Facilities	\$ 3,595	\$ 3,738	\$ 3,863
Communications	\$ 273	\$ 299	\$ 290
Finance	\$ 1,547	\$ 1,644	\$ 1,668
Human Resources	\$ 404	\$ 344	\$ 316
<i>Less Prior Year funds Per grantee</i>	\$ (397)		
<i>No-Year Carryover Funds - OTF</i>	\$ 2,557		
<b>TOTAL, Radio Free Asia</b>	<b>\$ 48,355</b>	<b>\$ 38,255</b>	<b>\$ 38,500</b>

**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc. (MBN)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
<b>Programming</b>			
Alhurra	\$ 28,015	\$ 28,904	\$ 29,478
Alhurra Iraq	\$ 4,329	\$ 4,221	\$ 3,850
Radio Sawa	\$ 9,641	\$ 9,179	\$ 9,594
MBN Digital	\$ 2,793	\$ 4,281	\$ 5,568
Afia Darfur	\$ 548	\$ 601	\$ 603
<b>Total, Programming</b>	<b>\$ 45,326</b>	<b>\$ 47,186</b>	<b>\$ 49,093</b>
<b>Overseas Offices</b>			
Baghdad Bureau	\$ 4,766	\$ 5,853	\$ 6,162
Beirut Production Center	\$ 4,783	\$ 4,568	\$ 4,738
Cairo Bureau	\$ 3,944	\$ 4,031	\$ 3,685
Dubai Production Center	\$ 5,953	\$ 6,532	\$ 6,526
Jerusalem Production Center	\$ 2,403	\$ 1,869	\$ 2,393
Rabat	\$ 543	\$ 697	\$ 1,460
Tunis	\$ 184	\$ 444	\$ 665
Maghreb #3	\$ 0	\$ 693	\$ 665
Maghreb #4	\$ 0	\$ 693	\$ 665
Investment UAE Bureau	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
<b>Total, Overseas Offices</b>	<b>\$ 22,576</b>	<b>\$ 25,380</b>	<b>\$ 26,959</b>
Technical Operations	\$ 22,313	\$ 22,231	\$ 21,414
Administration	\$ 13,267	\$ 11,780	\$ 11,987
Creative Services	\$ 2,300	\$ 2,442	\$ 2,447
Communications	\$ 396	\$ 389	\$ 390
Unspecified Reduction in GOE	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ (2,690)
<b>TOTAL, Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.</b>	<b>\$ 106,178</b>	<b>\$ 109,408</b>	<b>\$ 109,600</b>

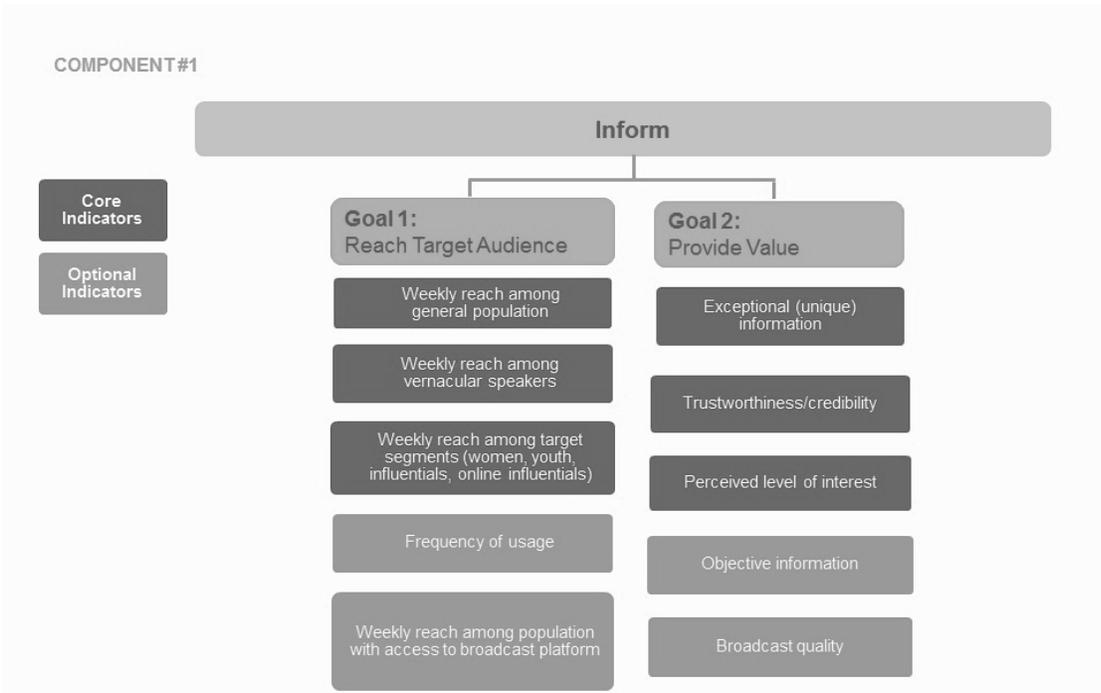
**The Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Broadcasting Capital Improvements (BCI)  
Summary of Appropriated Funds  
FY 2014 - FY 2016**

(\$ in thousands)

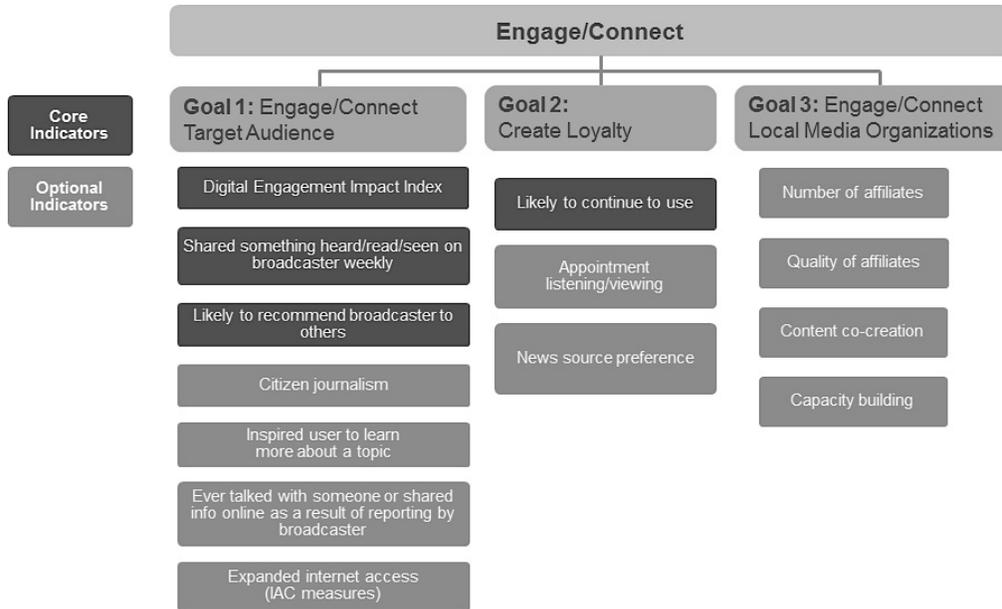
Broadcasting Capital Improvements	FY 2014 Actuals	FY 2015 Program Plan	FY 2016 Request
<b>Maintenance, Improvements, Replace and Repair (MIRR)</b>			
Continuing M&R	\$ 2,805	\$ 2,068	\$ 2,068
VOA TV M&R	\$ 1,025	\$ 573	\$ 573
Security M&R	\$ 625	\$ 542	\$ 542
HVAC System M&R	\$ 793	\$ 515	\$ 515
Office of Cuba Broadcasting	\$ 0	\$ 133	\$ 133
<b>Upgrade of Existing Facilities Projects</b>			
Cohen Bldg.-Upgrade/Renovation & Consolidation(Phase II)	\$ 1,000	\$ 0	\$ 0
<b>Satellites</b>			
Satellite & Terrestrial Program Feeds	\$ 1,079	\$ 969	\$ 969
HF Kuwait Investment	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 2,700
VOA HD Investment	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 2,500
<b>TOTAL, Broadcasting Capital Improvements</b>	<b>\$ 7,812</b>	<b>\$ 4,800</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>

# Appendix Attachment B: Impact Model

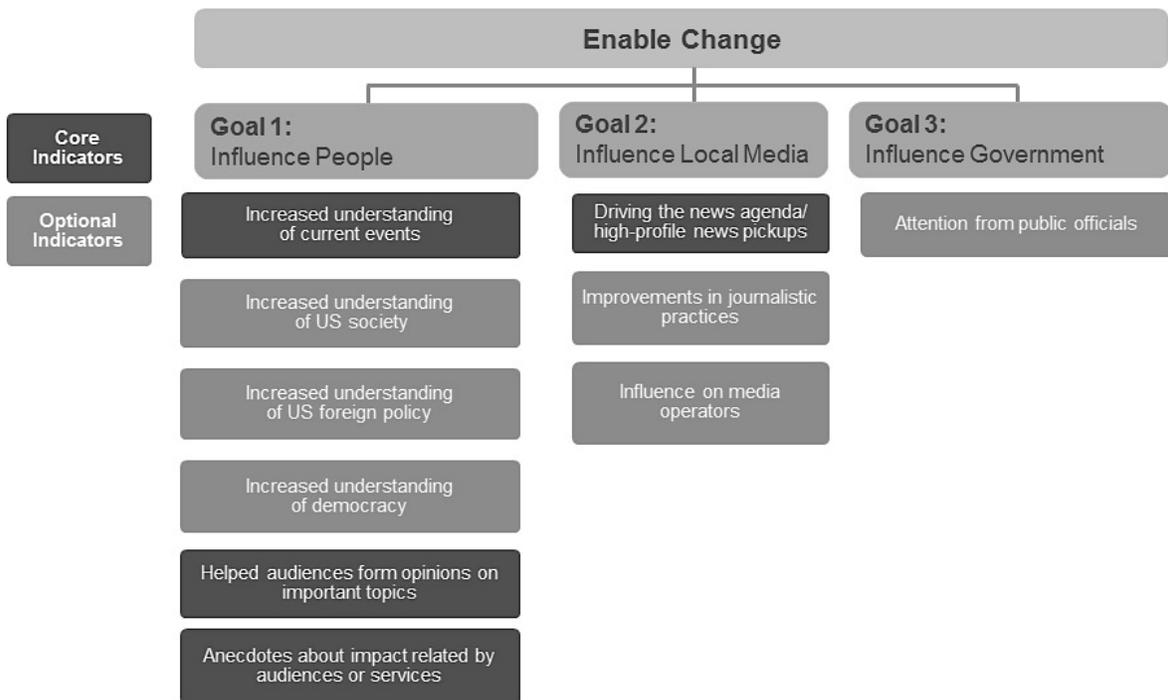
# Appendix Attachment A: Impact Model



COMPONENT #2



COMPONENT #3







**Broadcasting  
Board of  
Governors**

330 Independence Avenue, SW | Washington, DC 20237  
Telephone: 202-203-4545 | Fax: 202-203-4568  
E-mail: [publicaffairs@bbg.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@bbg.gov)

