U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA

## USAGM Research and Performance Assessment

**For any media organization, understanding the audience is critical to developing programming that is appealing and impactful. USAGM has a unique challenge in that our audiences are located in more than 100 countries with diverse specialized media environments. Moreover, as a U.S. government agency, USAGM has an obligation to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars and demonstrate the effectiveness of our programs to Congress and other stakeholders.**



### USAGM SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

**Survey Data:**
USAGM Surveys
Omnibus Surveys
Ratings Data

**Digital Metrics:**
Website Analytics
Social Media Analytics (from platforms and third-party services)
Digital Ratings and Comparison Tools

**Anecdotal:**
Evidence on guest appearances, impact stories, news pick-ups, government reactions, etc.

**Other:**
Databases (CRM, etc.)
Internal quality review

### APPROACH TO RESEARCH

USAGM collects research data to understand the composition of our audiences, how they consume media in general, how and how often they consume USAGM media, what topics are appealing to them, and whether our programming is influential.

This information is collected via extensive surveys in our markets conducted by reputable research firms that contract with the agency. The surveys are in-person (or by phone in places like Iran where researchers are unable to operate freely), and are nationally representative. For example, a sample survey size in a country is 1,500–2,000 completed interviews representative of urban/rural audiences, male and female audiences, and different age groups. Once data are collected, USAGM and the research directors at its networks review and vet the data for accuracy and reliability before accepting audience or impact measurements.

Survey research is augmented by measurements of our digital and social media platforms, which offer almost instantaneous feedback on the performance of USAGM media online. USAGM is undertaking a large data visualization project to better utilize the information we receive from these platforms and enable these data to inform editorial decisions in USAGM networks for better targeting of audiences.

All of this research is unclassified, and available to interagency partners upon request. USAGM is currently building a portal for interagency colleagues to more easily access our reports and data.



## IMPACT MODEL

USAGM has developed an Impact Model to serve as a framework for collecting data on our audiences and measuring the effectiveness of our media programming. The Impact Model is comprised of over 30 indicators organized around the agency's mission: to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. Core indicators (in red) are consistently applied across markets. Optional indicators (in blue) are applied in the markets where they are relevant.

## IMPACT MODEL

| | GOALS | INDICATORS — HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| **Inform** | Goal: Reach Target Audiences | Weekly reach (among general population)<br>Weekly digital visits<br>Weekly reach among vernacular speakers<br>Weekly reach among target segment (women, youth, influential, online influential, etc.)<br>Weekly reach among population with access to broadcast platform<br>Alternative reach indicators for denied areas (e.g., results of refugee or traveler surveys)<br>Additional digital reach indicators (e.g., deliberate video views) |
| | Goal: Provide Value | Exceptional (unique) information<br>Trustworthiness/credibility<br>Perceived level of interest<br>Broadcast quality (audience)<br>Objective information<br>Recognition of quality or prestige of service |
| **Engage/Connect** | Goal: Engage Target Audiences | Digital engagement actions<br>Shared something from broadcaster weekly<br>Likely to recommend broadcaster to others<br>Audience participation/facilitate dialogue among audience<br>Inspired user to learn more about a topic<br>Expanded internet access |
| | Goal: Engage/Connect Media Market | Citizen journalism submissions<br>Number of affiliates<br>Content co-creation with affiliates<br>Capacity building<br>Content downloaded by affiliates |
| | Goal: Create Loyalty | Audience likely to continue to use<br>Appointment listening/viewing<br>Deliberate digital brand usage<br>News source preference |
| **Be Influential** | Goal: Be Influential with People | Increased understanding of current events<br>Helped users form opinions on important topics<br>Anecdotes about impact related by audiences or services<br>Increased understanding of U.S. society<br>Increased understanding of U.S. foreign policy |
| | Goal: Be Influential with Media | Driving the news agenda/high-profile news pickups<br>Improvements in journalistic practices<br>Influence on media operators |
| | Goal: Be Influential with Governments | Attention (positive or negative) from public officials |

## REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Each year, USAGM is required to report to Congress on the fulfillment of its mission. The Performance and Accountability Report summarizes USAGM's progress on each impact objective. Below is an excerpt from the FY22 report on our top indicators:

**IMPACT PERFORMANCE GOAL 1.1:**
**REACH SIGNIFICANT AUDIENCES**

| Measured Weekly Audience (in millions) | FY 2018 Actual | FY 2019 Actual | FY 2020 Actual | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Target[1] | FY 2022 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| USAGM | 345 | 350 | 354 | 394 | 394 | 410 |
| VOA | 275 | 281 | 278 | 312 | 309 | 326 |
| RFE/RL | 33.9 | 38.1 | 41.1 | 37.2 | 37.3 | 40.6 |
| RFA | 50.7 | 50.7 | 49.5 | 59.8 | 60.0 | 58.3 |
| MBN | 24.7 | 24.3 | 27.5 | 31.1 | 34.0 | 27.4 |
| OCB[2] | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | NA |

[1] FY 2022 targets are from USAGM's FY 2023 Congressional Budget Request.

[2] USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2022. The last survey data was compiled for the FY 2017 PAR and the audience data is no longer considered current. A survey is planned and will be reported in FY 2023.

**IMPACT PERFORMANCE GOAL 1.2:**
**PROVIDE PROGRAMMING THAT AUDIENCES FIND TRUSTWORTHY**

| Program Credibility – percentage of weekly audience who consider information to be very or somewhat trustworthy | FY 2018 Actual | FY 2019 Actual | FY 2020 Actual | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Target | FY 2022 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VOA | 84 | 83 | 83 | 81 | 82 | 83 |
| RFE/RL | 77 | 73 | 75 | 74 | 76 | 78 |
| RFA | 77 | 77 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 77 |
| MBN | 80 | 75 | 68 | 70 | 73 | 70 |
| OCB | 97 | 97 | 97 | 97 | -- | NA |