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## BBG Audience Research and Research Methodology

**Performance Culture:** The BBG fosters a research-driven and performance-oriented culture. We use research as one means of measuring our reach and impact, and to analyze the media environments in which we operate.

**Quality Research:** The BBG's audience and market research is done in accordance with the highest professional standards via local market research firms around the world through a contract with the Gallup Organization. We also rely on industry experts such as AC Nielsen, Comscore and others for market data.

To achieve maximum objectivity, measurements are performed independently. Outside research providers under contract to the BBG, currently Gallup and previously InterMedia, carried out the audience research on VOA, OCB, RFE/RL, RFA, and MBN for the years reported. The Broadcasting Satellite Users' Group, a multi-element working group not affiliated with the Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation, calculates the Satellite Effectiveness Index. Entity-wide performance values are computed by the IBB Office of Research and verified by each entity's research director.

**Investment in Research:** Funding dedicated for research has increased from \$1.5 million in 2001 to \$10 million in 2013, though sequestration cuts reduced that funding down closer to \$5 million. New markets continue to open up to research while some remain stubbornly closed. While money for research is expected to shrink in 2014 and beyond due to sequestration and other fiscal challenges across the federal government, the BBG will continue to find ways to effectively measure its markets and performance within them.

Reliable and high quality research allows us to assess our effectiveness, and to tailor programming and delivery methods.

**Measures:** The BBG measures effectiveness in terms of the *size of our audience, the quality and reliability of our programming*, and whether our broadcasts *increase the audience's understanding* of current events and American society and policies.

The performance indicators are a best effort to measure each broadcast entity's performance level, as well as the combined BBG audience worldwide. The numerical size of the audience reflects the 'countable' audience, *e.g.* the number of listeners and viewers within a population projected from those identified in a scientific survey using probability sampling. Wherever possible, BBG-commissioned surveys are national in scope, including rural and economically marginal populations that are typically excluded from commercial media studies but whose behavior is critical for understanding BBG's audience and tracking performance.

Although the BBG has conducted surveys in more than 90 countries, and is finding ways within tight budget environments to add key performance indicators to others' surveys, it cannot survey everywhere that an audience *might possibly* exist, and the estimate may therefore reflect an undercount. Further, audience size, and its expression as a percentage of the adults within a population, is not the same as 'popularity', or "preferred source of news"; indicators sometimes cited by others' research or polls. This measure, however, is in keeping with the standards of the Conference of International Broadcasting Audience Researchers, and is a key indicator of success for international broadcasters in a local market.

**Reach:** The standard measure of audience reach for the BBG and other international broadcasters such as the BBC and Deutsche Welle is the number of adults (15+) who "listened, watched or saw online materials last week."

**Program Credibility:** Measures of audience perceptions of trustworthiness and credibility consist of the percent of those listening at least once a week who consider the station's news and information "very trustworthy" or "somewhat trustworthy" in the survey.

**Understanding:** The degree to which broadcasts enhance audience understanding of current events. The score consists of the percent of those listening or viewing at least once a week who say that the broadcasts have "increased their understanding of current events" "somewhat" or "a great deal" in an annual survey.

**Hard to Reach Locales:** In countries where information is tightly controlled and tuning in to foreign broadcasts is sometimes illegal or where populations are hard to access, audiences can be difficult to measure. Numbers for these hard-to-reach countries and regions (where we can only conduct non-representative surveys) such as Cuba, North Korea, Tibet, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, are not included in our overall estimate.

**Quantitative audience** measurements are conducted through national and sub-national or urban surveys, using face-to-face interviews when possible and phone interviews in a few restricted environments.

**Random probability sampling** is used where possible, and sample sizes range from 1,000-5,000 respondents. Probability sampling means that survey participants are chosen such that each unit of the population has a known probability of being surveyed. The use of random probability sampling allows a researcher to make extrapolations to the wider population.

**Non-representative surveys** are surveys that do not employ random probability sampling, and thus cannot be extrapolated to the population. These would include surveys of diaspora or refugee populations.

*The Broadcasting Board of Governors is an independent federal agency, supervising all U.S. government-supported, civilian international broadcasting, whose mission is inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. BBG broadcasts reach an audience of 206 million in more than 100 countries. BBG networks include the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa), Radio Free Asia, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio and TV Marti).*