



Executive Summary

The Broadcasting Board of Governors

(\$ in thousands)

International Broadcasting Operations	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Annualized CR	FY 2018 Request
Federal Entities			
Voice of America	\$218,450	\$221,133	\$199,756
Office of Cuba Broadcasting	\$27,140	\$28,169	\$23,656
International Broadcasting Bureau	\$61,200	\$60,300	\$52,863
<i>Internet Freedom; Anti-Censorship (non-add to IBB starting in FY 2017)</i>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation	\$181,483	\$175,752	\$166,092
Total, Federal Entities	\$488,273	\$485,354	\$442,367
Non-Federal Entities			
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (with OCO in FY 2016)	\$108,414	\$109,900	\$99,600
Radio Free Asia	\$38,500	\$39,846	\$35,296
Middle East Broadcasting Networks (with OCO in FY 2016)	\$109,600	\$108,400	\$103,100
Total, Non-Federal Entities	\$256,514	\$258,146	\$237,996
Total, International Broadcasting Operations	\$744,787	\$743,500	\$680,363
Broadcasting Capital Improvements	\$4,800	\$4,791	\$4,791
Total, Broadcasting Capital Improvements	\$4,800	\$4,791	\$4,791
BBG Grand Total—Appropriation/Request	\$749,587	\$748,291	\$685,154

“Our foreign policy calls for a direct, robust and meaningful engagement with the world... Free nations are the best vehicle for expressing the will of the people – and America respects the right of all nations to chart their own path. My job is not to represent the world. My job is to represent the United States of America. But we know that America is better off, when there is less conflict – not more.”

President Donald J. Trump, February 28, 2017

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the President is requesting \$685.1 million for the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). Although the funding request represents an 8.4 percent reduction from the FY 2017 annualized CR level, the Administration has prioritized funding for countering Russian misinformation, combatting violent extremism, and

enhancing programming for North Korean audiences in this request.

BBG is the U.S. government’s civilian international media agency, comprising the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa (under the Middle East

Broadcasting Networks (MBN), and Radio and TV Martí (under the Office of Cuba Broadcasting – OCB). Collectively, the five networks of the BBG are known as U.S. International Media, or USIM.

One of the largest media organizations in the world, BBG provides content in 61 languages to a record measured audience of 278 million people each week in more than 100 countries on radio, television, and digital media platforms with some 4,000 employees, 1,500 stringer reporters, and 50 news bureaus. BBG’s extensive network of seasoned, well-respected and well-connected journalists is particularly strong in regions where the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Russia, Iran, China, and other global actors that do not share American values are attempting to make further inroads.

BBG is committed to making efficient and effective use of taxpayer resources and continuing to achieve significant impact in the world by prioritizing spending in key areas; scaling back outdated transmission methods in favor of platforms more appropriate for key

audiences, including digital media and television; and achieving efficiencies through improved coordination among its five broadcast networks.

In a difficult, even hostile, global political and media environment, support for U.S. international broadcasting is a critical component of American power, security, and prosperity. Consistent with America’s commitment to free speech and free expression, the BBG’s networks advance U.S. national interests by providing audiences in closed societies, or where free media is not yet fully established, with consistently accurate and compelling journalism and other content that opens minds and stimulates debate. BBG’s networks demonstrate to the world the values that reflect American society: freedom, openness, and democracy. Societies that embrace these values support U.S. interests because they enjoy greater stability and prosperity, engage more peacefully with their neighbors, more forcefully reject terrorism and extremism, and make better political allies and trade partners for the United States.

GLOBAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENT: MORE MEDIA, LESS MEDIA FREEDOM

In a world awash in media, with interconnected platforms that are widely available through digital and social media, governments and non-state actors have weaponized information to generate a relentless, sophisticated stream of false narratives that often go unchallenged and therefore gain credibility, creating a false view of reality. ISIS and Boko Haram exploit

modern media tools to promote extremist views, sow seeds of discontent, and subvert democratic ideals.

At the same time, the forces of democracy and free expression are also active. People around the world raise their voices and mobilize to protest abuses of authority, to curb pervasive

corruption, and hold leaders accountable. Their tools, too, are those of modern popular expression – social media, mobile phones, and software to circumvent internet censorship.

Media use and consumption patterns vary widely by market, but certain trends are clear. Television remains the dominant medium worldwide for news and entertainment. The internet now outstrips radio as a source for news in more-developed media environments, and social media show unabated, explosive growth nearly everywhere. Radio – especially on the FM band –

remains a powerful medium in much of the developing world.

Yet even as information sources and platforms proliferate, access to accurate, free, and open information is eroding. Global media freedom has steadily deteriorated over the past decade. This year, internet freedom declined for the sixth consecutive year, according to Freedom House, as more governments censor information of public interest while expanding surveillance and cracking down on privacy tools.

MISSION AND ROLES

The BBG’s founding legislation requires the agency to:

- inform people through accurate, objective, and comprehensive news;
- represent American society, culture, and thinking;
- and present and discuss U.S. policy.

BBG’s mission statement reflects these statutory imperatives: “to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.”

BBG’s five networks pursue this mission through complementary, reinforcing roles and cooperate through the U.S. International Media Coordinating Committee (ICC), which is chaired by the BBG Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and meets regularly to efficiently and effectively coordinate operations and develop strategy. RFE/RL, RFA, and OCB

emphasize domestic news for their geographically-defined audiences. Covering developments specific to their target markets is their specialty, most notably in countries without a free press or in transition. At the same time, each also covers regional and international issues and events (including those in the United States, as warranted) to ensure comprehensive news coverage. VOA emphasizes international and regional news and in-depth coverage of the United States. VOA also covers local events to ensure comprehensive news coverage, especially in areas where it is the only BBG presence, such as sub-Saharan Africa. MBN provides a full range of international, regional, and local news in Arabic as well as thorough coverage of the United States.

TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

The BBG networks accomplish their goals by building relationships of trust and credibility with global audiences. In addition to high-quality, fact-based news and information, BBG engages audiences and connects them with one another and with the wider world, including by providing technologies that circumvent Internet censorship.

BBG credibility is further bolstered and reach extended through news and information in vernacular languages as well as global languages. With the high

levels of trust that audiences place in them, BBG's networks become a go-to source in times of crisis or to verify other information sources.

Discerning news-seekers shun propaganda and content that they believe is not trustworthy. A legally mandated "firewall" prohibits political interference in the agency's content, ensuring that journalists and editors can develop programming that reflects the highest professional standards of journalism.

ELEVATED IMPACT MEASUREMENTS

While BBG's measured weekly audiences have grown by 113 million since 2010 to a record 278 million, impact is more than just reaching audiences. As part of the agency's aggressive reform efforts, BBG has developed and implemented an Impact Model to assess whether its programming makes a difference – what changes occur as a result of the agency's work – among audiences, local

media, and governments. Rooted in the agency's mission statement, the model tracks progress in the areas of informing, engaging and connecting, and being influential. The Impact Model allows BBG to track, understand, and explain its accomplishments with a host of mission-relevant indicators.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

BBG is committed to ongoing strategic and operational improvements. The FY 2018 Budget Request contains proposals to migrate to the most effective media platforms, respond readily to crises, keep pace with audiences in terms of their demographic composition and interests, and sharpen

strategy and results measurement to drive performance.

BBG will more narrowly target resources in order to achieve operational efficiencies to effectively perform its statutory missions and support U.S. foreign policy priorities.

The FY 2018 Request is **\$685.1 million, a \$63.1 million decrease from the FY 2017 Annualized CR level**, which reflects:

- Proposed reductions across BBG which would likely require the prioritization of certain language services; optimization of information technology; shifting away from shortwave transmissions, where appropriate; reducing staffing through attrition and reductions-in-force, where necessary; and realizing efficiencies in support services;
- \$680.4 million for International Broadcasting Operations, including Federal and non-Federal broadcasting entities of which \$10.0 million shall be allocated for anti-censorship; and
- \$4.7 million for Broadcasting Capital Improvements.