



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General**

**Inspection of the International Broadcasting Bureau's
Office of Engineering and Technical Services**

The Office of Engineering and Technical Services (IBB/E) in the Broadcasting Board of Governors' (BBG) International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) is a productive organization. Although it is no longer the technological leader it was in the heyday of shortwave, IBB/E has an enviable reputation for responsiveness and accomplishment.

IBB/E is performing and accomplishing its core mission. It is also agile, mobile, and global. Although IBB/E faces difficulties, many of them are not of its making. Nonetheless, IBB/E should communicate more effectively to internal and external audiences, involve its highly intelligent employees in planning for the future, and use its existing management and leadership skills. Plans and strategies should be followed and benchmarked.

In addition, OIG identified these other shortcomings:

- IBB/E lags behind many competitors in its use of such media as the Internet and television. IBB/E needs resources to help the agency catch up.
- Although IBB/E welcomes innovation, it has no earnest organization-wide effort to seek technological solutions and conduct research and development.
- Too often IBB/E's talented engineers are given solutions to implement, instead of being challenged with problems to solve. The organization is not getting as much as it should from its capable staff.
- IBB/E's main mission is signal delivery. However, IBB/E's monitoring and evaluating of this differs, depending on whether the medium is the Internet, television, or shortwave or frequency modulated radio.
- IBB/E spends a lot of money, and its contracts and procurement are well managed, but its training and guidelines for its procurement officials are insufficient.
- Complex, technical environments, such as IBB/E's Network Control Center and Information Technology directorate, do not have standard protocols and written standard operating procedures to guide employees. Critical infrastructure also needs capital investment.

After years of budget cuts, and with retirements looming, IBB/E also now needs to make workforce planning a priority. The use of frequent but unpredictable waivers of IBB's seemingly endless hiring freeze has sown confusion at IBB/E about the staffing plan. Staff training and the awards program need BBG management's attention.

Background: Office of Engineering and Technical Services

IBB/E delivers programs produced by Voice of America and by quasi-independent grantee broadcasters to audiences in target areas around the world. This global transmission network employs 622 people and has an annual budget of \$158.9 million. It has a goal of keeping America “on the air” using radio, television, and the Internet. The number of employees at IBB/E’s Washington, DC, headquarters is 172, and the number of American nationals employed by IBB/E at transmitting stations is 96.

Besides running a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week network control operation, IBB/E manages capital projects such as building new antennas, provides computer network services, negotiates frequency allocations, designs and procures high-technology audio-video solutions for the broadcasters, and supports the Department of State’s American Embassy Television Network.

Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General conducts independent audits, inspections, and investigations to promote effective management, accountability, and positive change in the Department of State, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and the foreign affairs community.

OIG’s Office of Inspections provides systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department of State, its posts abroad, and related activities. Inspections cover policy implementation, resource management, and management controls.

October 2, 2006