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Evaluation of the U.S. Agency for Global Media's Approach To Reducing Operations

ACQUISITIONS AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE DIVISION

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HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

AUD-AFA-IB-26-25

What OIG Evaluated

On March 14, 2025, the President signed Executive Order (E.O.) 14238, which required the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) to eliminate its non-statutory components and functions and reduce the performance of its statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law. On March 15, 2025, USAGM took immediate actions to comply with the Executive order, including terminating its grantees, placing employees on administrative leave, and cancelling many contracts.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this evaluation to determine whether USAGM applied key practices when it reduced operations in response to E.O. 14238.

What OIG Recommends

OIG is offering six recommendations concerning USAGM's efforts to reduce operations in compliance with E.O. 14238. Based on USAGM's response to a draft of this report, OIG considers all six recommendations resolved, pending further action. A synopsis of management's comments to the recommendations offered and OIG's replies follow each recommendation in the Audit Results section of this report. USAGM's response to a draft of this report is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix F.

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What OIG Found

USAGM did not apply key practices during its efforts to reduce operations in response to E.O. 14238. For example, USAGM could not demonstrate that it sufficiently considered the likely costs and benefits of the reforms that it implemented or that it used reliable data or evidence to inform its decision making, even in cases where programming data were readily available. Additionally, USAGM did not update its strategic plan to establish goals and objectives to guide its reduction in operations and did not effectively use an implementation team. Furthermore, USAGM did not demonstrate that it ensured that the agency could continue delivering services, both externally and internally, or that it considered strategic workforce planning.

One reason for the issues identified was that USAGM did not appropriately define the parameters of the instructions provided in E.O. 14238, which required that USAGM eliminate non-statutory components and functions to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law. The primary focus of USAGM efforts to determine its statutory minimum posture was on laws related to international broadcasting. However, there are many foundational laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies that do not appear to have been considered when USAGM made decisions on staffing requirements. Another reason for the issues identified was that USAGM had not established organizational goals to align its remaining employees and resources toward a clear, shared objective.

The reduction in operations diminished USAGM's capacity to fulfill its core statutory mission of informing, engaging, and connecting people worldwide in support of freedom and democracy. Additionally, OIG identified a decline in accountability and USAGM's cybersecurity program since USAGM implemented its reform efforts.

CONTENTS

OBJECTIVE	1
BACKGROUND	1
Timing of the Reduction in Operations	3
Key Practices for U.S. Government Agency Reform Efforts.....	4
EVALUATION RESULTS	6
Finding A: The U.S. Agency for Global Media Did Not Apply Key Practices In Its Efforts To Reduce Operations.....	6
RECOMMENDATIONS	26
APPENDIX A: PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY	27
Prior Office of Inspector General Reports.....	28
APPENDIX B: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ON ACTIONS TAKEN TO COMPLY WITH EXECUTIVE ORDER 14238	29
APPENDIX C: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION FROM JUNE 2025	32
APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THE U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA PROVIDED TO CONGRESS IN AUGUST 2025.....	36
APPENDIX E: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE REPORT – FEBRUARY 2025	47
APPENDIX F: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA RESPONSE	49
ABBREVIATIONS	52

OBJECTIVE

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this evaluation to determine whether the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) applied key practices when it reduced operations in response to Executive Order (E.O.) 14238.¹

BACKGROUND

USAGM is an independent federal agency responsible for providing news and information programming to international audiences. For FY 2024, USAGM reported that it was “uniquely capable of defending press freedom and access to information in some of the most challenging countries for journalists.” According to USAGM, these capabilities stemmed from (a) the scale at which the agency operated—working in 64 languages in over 100 foreign media markets around the world, with an FY 2023 measured audience of 420 million adults on a weekly basis outside the United States; (b) the range of local and technical expertise directly employed by the agency and its grantees, which included several thousand journalists and experts with local knowledge and understanding of the environments in which they operated; and (c) the shared mission of these efforts to deploy journalism and technical tools to protect people’s ability to seek, receive, and impart information, regardless of borders.²

Historically, USAGM implemented its mission by internally operating the Voice of America (VOA)³ and Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB),⁴ as well as providing grants⁵ to independent nonprofit organizations that conducted other international broadcasting activities including the following:

- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) served as a surrogate media source for 23 countries in 27 languages, including Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Ukraine.
- Radio Free Asia (RFA) broadcasted to audiences in Asia.
- Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN) broadcasted in Arabic to the Middle East and North African regions.

Through these entities, USAGM distributed programming by radio, television, digital media, and other platforms to audiences worldwide.

¹ E.O. 14238, Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy, March 14, 2025.

² USAGM, *FY 2024 Agency Financial Report*, page 5.

³ According to USAGM’s website, VOA used digital, web, and mobile media to engage viewers and listeners. VOA broadcasted to affiliates and used satellite transmissions to reach countries where free speech is banned or where civil society is under threat.

⁴ According to USAGM’s website, OCB broadcasted news, information, and analysis to people in Cuba.

⁵ In addition to grants to broadcasters, USAGM provided a grant to the Open Technology Fund to advance internet freedoms, including the research, development, implementation, and maintenance of technologies providing secure and uncensored access to USAGM content. During FY 2025, USAGM also provided a grant to the Frontline Media Fund, which served as a launchpad for incubating new USAGM initiatives. That grant was terminated.

On March 14, 2025, the President signed E.O. 14238, Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy, which states that “the non-statutory components and functions of [USAGM] shall be eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law, and [USAGM] shall reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law.”⁶ According to a report that USAGM sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB),⁷ USAGM took “aggressive and immediate steps” to comply with the Executive order the day after its issuance. For example, USAGM reported the following:

- Stopping all domestic news-gathering functions and shutting down domestic content uploads and radio transmissions.
- Placing 994 of its 1,147 federal employees on administrative leave.
- Engaging with the Office of Personnel Management to arrange for a reduction in force (RIF).
- Canceling contracts with 594 personal services contractors (PSC).^{8,9}
- Sending termination letters to USAGM’s grant recipients.
- Ordering grant recipients to cease making payments, stating that new grant costs were not allowed, except for closeout activities.
- Terminating, for convenience,¹⁰ most of its contracts.

Subsequently, in June 2025, USAGM issued RIF notices that reduced staffing levels by 639 employees. However, the RIF notices were later rescinded because of errors made during the process. In August 2025, USAGM reissued RIF notices that reduced staffing levels across USAGM by 532 employees. On March 7, 2026, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that the August 2025 RIF aimed at permanently laying off hundreds of USAGM workers was null and void.¹¹ The judge issued a return to work order for the employees.¹² However, the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals granted a temporary stay on the

⁶ E.O. 14238 § (a)(ii).

⁷ See Appendix B for a copy of the USAGM report sent to OMB.

⁸ The Federal Acquisition Regulation, § 37.104(d), states that “a personal services contract is characterized by the employer-employee relationship it creates between the Government and the contractor’s personnel.” A contract is personal in nature when performance is onsite, principal equipment is furnished by the government, services are applied directly to the integral effort of the agency, comparable services are performed in the same or similar agencies using civil service personnel, the need for the type of service is expected to last beyond 1 year, and the inherent nature of the service requires government direction or supervision.

⁹ According to USAGM’s website, USAGM used PSCs to work as reporters, producers, editors, translators, technicians, and in other journalism roles.

¹⁰ The Federal Acquisition Regulation, § 49.502, states that most fixed price contracts contain a clause allowing the government to terminate performance of work under a contract, in whole or in part, if the contracting officer determines that it is in the interests of the government.

¹¹ *Widakuswara v. Lake*, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 47041 (D.D.C. Mar. 7, 2026).

¹² *Ibid.*

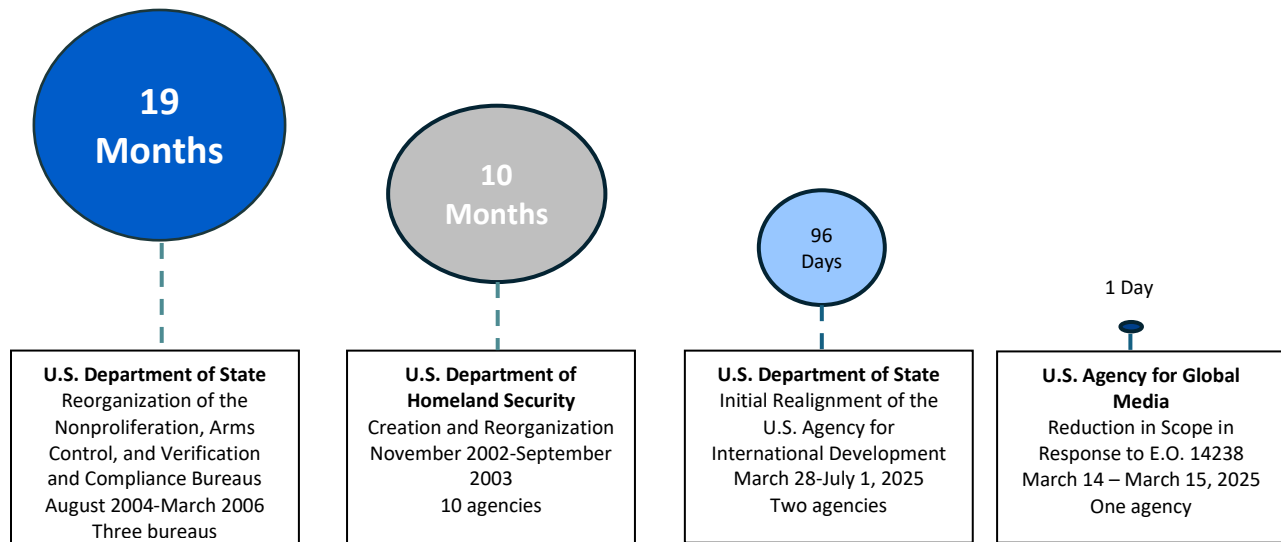
return to work order on March 31, 2026.¹³ As of July 30, 2026, 420 of the impacted USAGM employees remained on paid administrative leave.

In addition to reducing staffing, during FY 2025, USAGM reduced its property holdings and lease agreements,¹⁴ terminated or allowed certain contracts to lapse, and reduced discretionary expenditures.

Timing of the Reduction in Operations

A reorganization of a federal government agency is a significant undertaking. USAGM was required to assess complex legal issues to properly comply with the Executive order requirement to reduce performance to the minimum functions required by law. According to a report that USAGM sent to OMB,¹⁵ USAGM took significant actions the day after the issuance of the Executive order. The timeframe for reforming USAGM was unprecedented. The federal government conducted prior realignment and reorganization efforts over longer periods, with varying levels of success. Figure 1 depicts four government reform efforts.

Figure 1: Comparison of Agency Reform Efforts



Source: Generated by OIG based on review of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), *State Department: Key Transformation Practices Could Have Helped in Restructuring Arms Control and Nonproliferation Bureaus* (GAO-09-738, July 2009); President George W. Bush, *A Reorganization Plan for the Department of Homeland Security* (January 7, 2003); GAO, *Transfer of Budgetary Resources to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)* (GAO-04-329R, April 2004); OIG, *Evaluation of the Department of State’s Approach to Realigning U.S. Agency for International Development Functions*, page 6 (AUD-GEER-25-20, May 2025), and a USAGM report on its reduction in operations to OMB.

¹³ *Widakuswara v. Lake*, Nos. 25-5145, 26-5086, 26-5087, 2026 WL 970265, at *1 (D.C. Cir. Mar. 31, 2026) (per curiam) (staying the “orders entered on March 17, 2026 . . . to the extent that they require that ‘all employees placed on administrative leave pursuant to defendants’ March 2025 directive shall return to work’”).

¹⁴ OIG issued an audit report related to USAGM’s disposal of property—*Audit of Selected Property Disposals and Lease Terminations at the U.S. Agency for Global Media* (AUD-AFA-IB-26-16, July 2026).

¹⁵ See Appendix B for a copy of the USAGM report sent to OMB.

Key Practices for U.S. Government Agency Reform Efforts

There is extensive legal and policy guidance governing different aspects of agency efforts to reform or reorganize. For example, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has noted that reforming government is a complex activity that requires developing clear goals and the means for achieving them, and that “fully implementing major transformations can span several years and must be carefully and closely managed.”¹⁶ GAO work has found that successful agency reforms or transformations¹⁷ depend on adherence to change management practices such as establishing a dedicated team to manage the implementation of reforms and ensuring the continued delivery of services during the reform implementation.¹⁸

GAO compiled key practices and questions to be considered in agency reform efforts based on its past work. Specifically, GAO identified 4 broad categories for assessing agency reforms that comprise 58 key questions.¹⁹ Although USAGM’s efforts to reduce its operations were performed in response to an Executive order, its efforts included major transformations and staff reductions, which are all considered in GAO’s key questions to assess the development and implementation of agency reform efforts.²⁰ OIG selected a few key questions from each broad category to assess USAGM’s efforts to reduce operations in compliance with E.O. 14238. Table 1 outlines the key questions that OIG selected.

¹⁶ GAO, *Government Reorganization: Key Questions to Assess Reform Efforts*, pages 8 and 15 (GAO-18-427, June 2018).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 2, defines reform as organizational changes (e.g., major transformations, consolidations, and other reorganizations) and efforts “to streamline and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations.”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, page 15.

¹⁹ GAO-18-427, pages 7 and 8–19.

²⁰ The questions that OIG selected for review are foundational topics that are also addressed in other federal guidance. For example, OMB Circular A-94, “Guidelines and Discount Rates for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Federal Programs,” provides guidance on analyzing costs and benefits of federal activities. Similarly, the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, codified at 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 311-315, and the Information Quality Act, codified at 44 U.S.C § 3501(4), provides information on the importance of using good data and evidence to support government activities. Additionally, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352, and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024, Public Law 118-190, require agencies to conduct a data-driven strategic review to assess progress towards goals and objectives. OMB Memorandum M-18-19, “Improving the Management of Federal Programs and Projects through Implementing the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act,” June 25, 2018, provides guidance on improving program and project management within the federal government. Furthermore, the Office of Personnel Management, “Workforce Planning Guide,” November 2022, provides guidance on strategic workforce planning.

Table 1: GAO Categories and Key Questions Selected To Assess USAGM’s Approach To Reducing Operations

Category	Selected Key Questions
Goals and Outcomes 	 To what extent has the agency considered the likely costs and benefits of the proposed reforms?
Process for Developing Reforms 	 What data and evidence has the agency used to develop and justify its proposed reforms?  How, if at all, were the results of the agency’s strategic review process used to help guide the proposed reforms?
Implementing the Reforms 	 Has the agency established a dedicated implementation team that has the capacity, including staffing, resources, and change management, to manage the reform process?  Has the agency ensured their continued delivery of services during reform implementation?
Strategically Managing the Federal Workforce 	 To what extent has the agency conducted strategic workforce planning to determine whether it will have the resources and capacity needed, including the skills and competencies, in place for the proposed reforms or reorganization?

Source: Generated by OIG based on GAO-18-427.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Finding A: The U.S. Agency for Global Media Did Not Apply Key Practices In Its Efforts To Reduce Operations

OIG found that USAGM did not apply key practices in its efforts to reduce operations in response to E.O. 14238. For example, USAGM could not demonstrate that it sufficiently considered the likely costs and benefits of the reforms that it implemented or that it used reliable data or evidence to inform its decision making, even in cases where programming data were available. Additionally, USAGM did not update its *USAGM Strategic Plan*²¹ to establish goals and objectives to guide its reduction in operations and did not effectively use an implementation team. Furthermore, USAGM could not demonstrate that it ensured that the agency could continue to deliver services, both externally and internally, or that it considered strategic workforce planning.

One reason for the issues identified was that USAGM did not appropriately define the parameters of the instructions provided in E.O. 14238, which required USAGM to eliminate non-statutory components and functions to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law. The primary focus of USAGM's efforts to determine its statutory minimum posture was on laws related to international broadcasting. When making decisions on staffing requirements, USAGM did not consider many other foundational laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies. Another reason for the issues identified was that USAGM had not established organizational goals to align its remaining employees and resources toward a clear, shared objective.

The reduction in operations diminished USAGM's capacity to fulfill its core statutory mission of informing, engaging, and connecting people worldwide in support of freedom and democracy. Additionally, OIG identified a decline in accountability and USAGM's cybersecurity program since USAGM implemented its reform efforts.

Goals and Outcomes



According to GAO, "part of determining if agencies have successfully identified the goals of their proposed reforms is to determine whether the agency has built a business case analysis that presents facts and supporting details."²² OIG found that USAGM could not demonstrate that it sufficiently considered the likely costs and benefits of the reforms that it implemented in response to E.O. 14238. Based on interviews with USAGM officials, the reduction in operations was done without a detailed analysis of the cost or the impact on the organization's overall mission. For example, USAGM's Congressional Notification²³ focused

²¹ USAGM's strategic plan was most recently updated in January 2025.

²² Ibid., page 9.

²³ See Appendix C for a copy of the notification.

almost entirely on how many positions USAGM retained to achieve the minimum presence required by law without addressing how USAGM would carry out its core statutory mission to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.

OIG found that USAGM could not demonstrate that it sufficiently assessed the impact that the loss of experienced personnel would have on operations. For example, OIG found that technical facilities and related support staff were not adequately considered when determining which employees to put on administrative leave. Additionally, in a document that USAGM provided to one of its unions, dated August 19, 2025, USAGM estimated that the RIF, which was executed in August 2025, would result in payroll savings.²⁴ However, because of ongoing legal proceedings regarding the RIF, as of July 2026, USAGM continued to have 420 employees on administrative leave,²⁵ which USAGM estimated cost \$3.2 million biweekly (e.g., \$82.8 million annually). Furthermore, USAGM continued to reinstate staff who were put on administrative leave because of identified gaps in subject matter expertise.

Additionally, USAGM could not demonstrate that it considered the impact of the reduction in operations on its credibility and influence when broadcasting services were abruptly halted in March 2025. The decision to halt services resulted in lapses in digital content production and broadcasts. According to the USAGM officials, the following services were halted:

- VOA ceased production of new content in all language services in March 2025.
- RFE/RL ceased certain services and operations later in 2025 and in 2026.
- RFA halted radio and satellite transmissions by the end of March 2025 (after USAGM halted access to transmitters carrying its programming).²⁶
- OCB stopped broadcasting on March 15, 2025, but resumed broadcasting on March 26, 2025.
- MBN halted its broadcasting in June 2025 and began digital content services.

In some instances, the decision to cease broadcasting operations in certain languages had significant impact on U.S. priorities. For example, USAGM halted VOA Persian-language service on March 15, 2025, when USAGM placed all VOA Persian-language employees on administrative leave. As reported, VOA Persian-language broadcasting service resumed when USAGM recalled VOA Persian-language service employees from administrative leave after Israeli-U.S. military action began in Iran on June 13, 2025. However, according to USAGM officials, on June 20, 2025, USAGM performed a RIF that left only two employees working for the VOA Persian-language service—one of whom had no language proficiency. As of July 6, 2026, USAGM had 66 employees working for the Persian-language service. The cancellation of contracts related to audience surveys, including placing all Office of Policy and Research staff on administrative leave, meant that USAGM could not pursue broadcasting

²⁴ USAGM, “Proposed RIF Organizational Realignment,” August 19, 2025.

²⁵ The administrative leave for employees began in March 2025.

²⁶ RFE/RL and RFA resumed services only after federal courts ordered USAGM to disburse their congressionally appropriated funding for FY 2025.

“based on reliable information about its potential audience.”²⁷ Furthermore, USAGM cancelled activities related to tracking and reporting on its broadcasting activities worldwide and, therefore, could not effectively measure the impact and reach of its programming, nor could it assess the change that its broadcast programming made for audience members, in the local media sector, and among governments. In July 2026, USAGM officials stated that the agency was working to reinstate some of the cancelled contracts, but the agency will not be able to recover data lost when contracts were cancelled and subject matter experts were placed on administrative leave.

In her statement to Congress as part of her confirmation hearing, the USAGM Chief Executive Officer nominee acknowledged the need to rebuild some USAGM capabilities and to restore research capacity to measure reach and viewership. Additionally, in July 2026, USAGM informed Congress about efforts to expand current levels of operations. For example, USAGM stated that it plans to expand VOA’s global impact and reconstitute operations while working within staffing and infrastructure constraints, expand Korean language programming to FY 2024 levels, increase programming in Persian, and prioritize digital analytics activities.

Without timely information on likely costs associated with the reduction in operations, USAGM could not effectively plan its reduction-related activities. Performing a cost-benefit analysis with reliable data would have allowed USAGM to systematically gather relevant and timely information and feedback on the likely costs of reducing operations, such as the costs related to employee separations, paid administrative leave, records disposition, overtime for reduction activities, and property management. Furthermore, a cost-benefit analysis could have provided useful information on the anticipated value of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the reform and potential impacts on the reduction of broadcasting services.

Process for Developing Approach To Reduce Operations



Prior GAO work has demonstrated that it is important for agencies to directly and continuously involve employees, Congress, and other key stakeholders in the development of any major reforms. Such efforts help facilitate the development of reform goals and objectives, as well as incorporate insights from a frontline perspective.²⁸

Data and Evidence

GAO reported that agencies are better equipped to address management and performance challenges when managers effectively use data and evidence, such as program evaluations and performance data, that provide information on how well a program or agency is achieving its goals.²⁹ Furthermore, GAO stated that management should obtain relevant data from reliable

²⁷ 22 U.S.C. § 6202 (a).

²⁸ GAO-18-427, page 10.

²⁹ Ibid., page 11.

sources in a timely manner based on identified information requirements.³⁰ However, USAGM could not demonstrate that it used reliable data or evidence to inform its decision making related to the reduction in operations, even in cases where programming data were available.³¹

For example, prior to FY 2025, USAGM collected quantifiable data to assess the impact of its broadcasts. This data included website and social media analytics as well as structured anecdotal evidence including news pick-ups by other major news media, co-productions with media partners, reactions from government officials, and visible policy changes. To supplement its internally-collected data, USAGM regularly contracted with third-party research organizations to conduct in-person and phone surveys of its audience. Historically, USAGM management used these data to understand the composition of its audiences, how the audience consumed media in general, how and how often audiences consumed USAGM media, what topics appealed to audiences, and whether the programming was impactful.

However, OIG found that USAGM did not use the available audience-impact data and evidence to decide which language services to retain or prioritize. Instead, USAGM initially stated that it was limiting programming to certain countries and languages that it determined were required by statute. For example, in a report to OMB,³² USAGM stated that it believed that language services for China, Cuba, Afghanistan, and Persia were required by law, but that it could eliminate all other services. However, as previously noted, USAGM halted VOA Persian-language service on March 15, 2025, and did not resume service until June 13, 2025, after the beginning of the Israeli-U.S. war with Iran.

Additionally, because of insufficient planning and the accelerated timeframe for taking action to reduce operations, USAGM implemented some decisions related to cost savings based on insufficient information. As a result, OIG found that USAGM reversed, or plans to reverse, some of these decisions, incurring additional costs to taxpayers. For example, USAGM canceled contracts needed to maintain operations and meet the agency's statutory minimum requirements, including contracts that supported IT security, property management, and data gathering related to broadcasting. In addition, during the audit of USAGM's financial statements, USAGM officials stated that some key subsidiary accounting systems were discontinued during FY 2025, increasing the difficulty for USAGM to provide needed data for certain material line items.³³ Furthermore, during 2025, USAGM terminated its property management system and did not identify a replacement for several months. As of February 2026, USAGM officials were still reconciling property records to add data to the new system.³⁴ USAGM stated that the discontinuation of the property system occurred without a fully

³⁰ GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, page 59 (GAO-14-704G, September 2014).

³¹ Additional information on the insufficient use of data and evidence to support decisions made to reduction operations is included in the Goals and Outcomes section of this report.

³² See Appendix B.

³³ OIG, *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media's FY 2025 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-IB-26-10, November 2025), *Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting*, page 3.

³⁴ OIG, *Audit of Selected Property Disposals and Lease Terminations at the U.S. Agency for Global Media*, page 8 (AUD-AFA-IB-26-16, July 2026).

functional replacement system, a data transition plan, or supporting procedures. Furthermore, USAGM stated that it was considering restoring the prior property management system or implementing another appropriate platform.³⁵

As previously noted, in July 2026, USAGM informed Congress about efforts to expand current levels of operations that relate to issues identified in this report. For example, USAGM stated that it plans to transition more financial management activities to shared services and supplement its existing financial management workforce with employees who have financial management and grants expertise, augment cybersecurity staffing, and reacquire IT monitoring and defensive capabilities. Additionally, USAGM noted that it will temporarily use contractor support to address priority needs, which may increase costs in the short term, until employees are on board.

Finally, OIG found that USAGM did not effectively communicate details of its reduction in operations to its employees and to external stakeholders, including Congress. For example, USAGM staff stated that they were not notified about the reduction in operations until decisions related to the reduction in staffing were made and were not consulted prior to canceling contracts. Additionally, USAGM did not provide a congressional notification until June 3, 2025, almost 3 months after the reduction in operations had been implemented. The notification generally focused on the positions that USAGM planned to retain at that time, with some information on continued broadcasting. However, the congressional notification did not provide sufficient information to allow stakeholders to gain a clear understanding of the reduction in operations. For example, the notification did not provide specific data on operational changes, impact on USAGM's mission, or strategic impact. Because of the initial lack of information, Congress asked USAGM to provide additional information, including requests for specific data on broadcasting and staffing.³⁶

Strategic Review Process

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010³⁷ and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024³⁸ require agencies to conduct a data-driven strategic review to assess progress towards goals and objectives. Data-driven reviews provide a mechanism for agency leaders to bring together the people, resources, and analysis needed to drive progress on agency priorities and goals, review the organization's performance, diagnose problems and opportunities, and identify adjustments needed to improve performance.³⁹

Agencies are required to publish a strategic plan by the first Monday in February of a year following the year in which the term of the President commences. Strategic plans should include the long-term goals the agency aims to achieve, which actions the agency will take to

³⁵ Ibid., page 22.

³⁶ See Appendix D for a copy of USAGM's response to requests for information from Congress.

³⁷ Public Law 111-352.

³⁸ Public Law 118-190.

³⁹ OMB Circular A-11, "Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget," §§ 260.1-260.2 (August 2025).

realize those goals, and how the agency will address challenges and risks that may hinder reaching the identified objectives.⁴⁰ The strategic plan on USAGM’s public website had not been updated since January 2025 (which is before the issuance of E.O. 14238),⁴¹ and a USAGM official confirmed that a more current strategic plan had not been developed. Considering the changes that have been implemented at USAGM since January 2025, it is reasonable to assume that the publicly-available strategic plan does not reflect USAGM’s current goals and objectives. Without an up-to-date strategic plan, USAGM will not be adequately positioned to help guide its reduction in operations and assess the execution of its reform efforts. Additionally, setting strategic direction is a key component of strategic workforce planning;⁴² therefore, an updated strategic plan is necessary to establish the optimum size and composition of the USAGM workforce.

Implementing the Reduction of Operations



GAO’s key practices indicate that incorporating change management practices improves the likelihood of successful reforms. Additionally, GAO noted that organizational transformations should be led by a dedicated team of high-performing leaders within the agency.⁴³ Furthermore, GAO noted that major transformations must be carefully and closely managed.

Implementation Team

GAO reported that dedicating a strong and stable implementation team responsible for a transformation’s day-to-day management is important to ensure that reforms receive the focused, full-time attention needed to be sustained and successful. Furthermore, GAO found that, because agency reform is a large undertaking, the “implementation team must have direct access to and be accountable to top leadership.”⁴⁴

According to the congressional notification dated June 3, 2025, USAGM developed a plan to comply with E.O. 14238. USAGM stated that senior leadership developed and approved the plan after determining what requirements constituted the statutory minimum. USAGM stated that the leadership team included USAGM’s General Counsel; Acting Chief Executive Officer; Chief Financial Officer; Director of Human Resources; Director of the Office of Management; and Director of the Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation. Additionally, a USAGM official stated that USAGM assigned senior career employees to an implementation team, which was tasked with managing USAGM’s reorganization. The implementation team originally consisted of a Senior Advisor, the Director of Human Resources and other Office of Human

⁴⁰ OMB Circular A-11, § 230.2.

⁴¹ *USAGM Strategic Plan*, updated January 2025.

⁴² Office of Personnel Management, *Workforce Planning Guide*, page 11, November 2022.

⁴³ GAO-18-427, page 15.

⁴⁴ GAO, *State Department: Leadership Focus Needed to Guide Agency Reform Efforts* (GAO-19-450, August 2019).

Resources personnel, the Deputy Chief Management Officer, the Director of Policy and Research, the General Counsel, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Based on the organizational responsibilities and experience of the officials that were part of the implementation team, OIG determined that the team likely had the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully implement an agency reorganization. However, according to USAGM employees, decisions related to USAGM's reorganization were communicated to members of the working group after being made by members of the United States DOGE Service (also known as the Department of Government Efficiency) and USAGM's Front Office without their input. For example, members of the implementation team stated that they were not consulted about decisions to terminate grants, cancel contracts, place 994 federal employees on administrative leave, and terminate contracts with 594 PSCs. A member of the implementation team provided an internal memorandum advising leadership about USAGM's statutory requirements on March 17, 2025—3 days after E.O. 14238 was issued. However, USAGM had already taken steps on March 15, 2025, to implement E.O. 14238 requirements, without consulting the implementation team. Additionally, at least one member of the implementation team was asked to sign USAGM's congressional notification dated June 3, 2025, without being consulted on its contents. This congressional notification detailed USAGM's understanding of the agency's statutory minimum requirements and relevant staffing recommendations.

USAGM officials indicated that subject matter experts within the organization were not consulted before USAGM took certain administrative actions. For example, on June 20, 2025, USAGM sent RIF termination notices to 639 employees.⁴⁵ However, USAGM had to rescind the notices because of errors. According to implementation team members, USAGM did not follow guidance from the Office of Personal Management on performing RIFs and did not consider collective bargaining agreements established with unions. One implementation team member explained that they were removed from the implementation team after expressing concerns about the lack of consideration of collective bargaining agreements. On August 29, 2025, USAGM sent updated RIF termination notices to 532 employees. According to implementation team members, USAGM did not follow the proper RIF procedures again. As of July 2026, employees impacted by the RIF were on paid administrative leave because of pending legal proceedings.

Similarly, property management officials were not consulted about real property decisions. For example, USAGM elected to terminate a 15-year lease used for office and broadcasting space in Washington, DC. After USAGM canceled the lease, a decision was made to move into office space in a building that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration occupied. USAGM officials stated that subject matter experts within USAGM warned that the selected building would not fulfill USAGM requirements; however, the move proceeded. After taxpayer resources were used to cover the costs of the move, USAGM found that, as reported by internal

⁴⁵ USAGM, Press Release, June 20, 2025.

subject matter experts, the new building did not meet the agency's needs. As a result, USAGM moved again, returning to a building that it previously occupied.

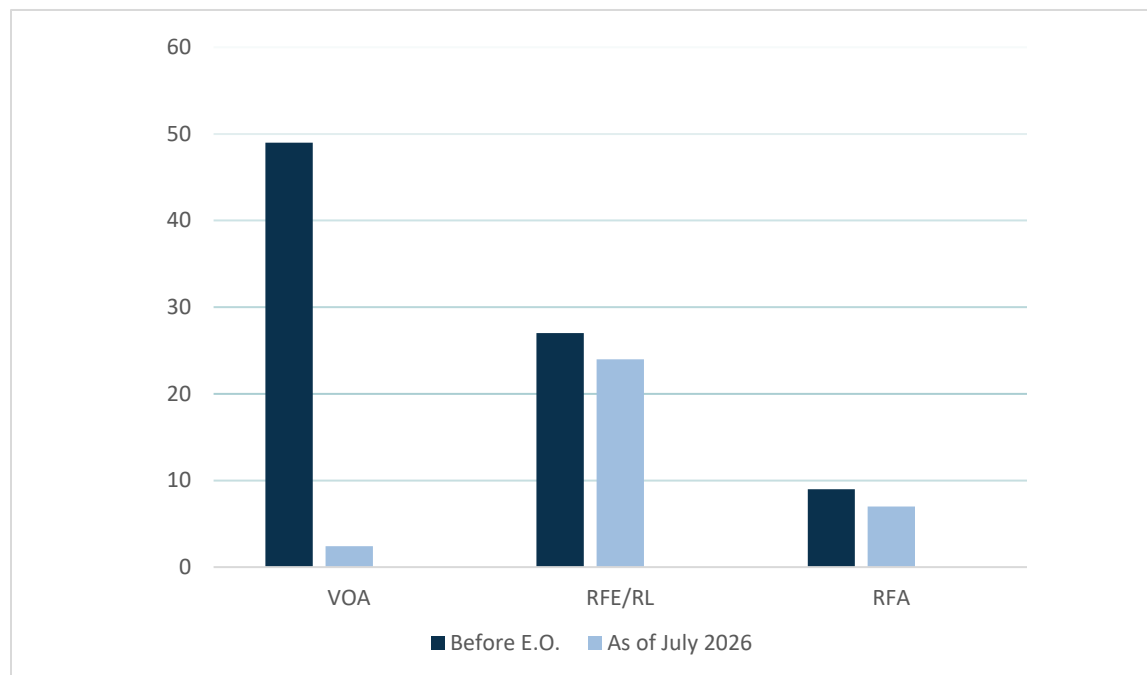
Delivery of Services

According to GAO, part of managing and monitoring agency reform involves ensuring the agency's ability to continue delivering services during the implementation of the reform. However, OIG identified issues with USAGM's ability to continue delivering broadcasting services and support internal operations. In a report to OMB that detailed USAGM's response to E.O. 14238, USAGM stated that VOA would continue broadcasting to China, Afghanistan, and Iran, using a two-person team for each service. Additionally, USAGM stated that it would continue OCB operations at a level determined to be sufficient. Regarding its grantees, USAGM stated that it sent termination letters to all grantees, noting that terminations may need to be linked to a rescission package. Although USAGM stated that it would continue broadcasting what is determined to be required by law, it also stated that it took actions that would impact its ability to perform broadcasting services. For example, USAGM stated that it had immediately stopped all relevant news-gathering functions, shutting down content uploads to distribution platforms and distribution to satellite channels. As previously noted, USAGM also put approximately 87 percent of its staff on administrative leave and cancelled contracts with 99 percent of its PSCs.

According to a USAGM official, in contrast to the report sent to OMB, USAGM required VOA to cease production of any new content in the 49 languages that it had previously broadcasted in before the Executive order, including content transmitted to China, Afghanistan, and Iran. As reported, VOA restarted its Persian-language service in June 2025 when the United States and Israel began the Twelve-Day War with Iran. As of July 2026, VOA was broadcasting in seven languages—Mandarin (China), Korean, Dari (Afghanistan), Pashto (Afghanistan), Kurdish Sorani, Kurdish Kurmanji, and Persian (Iran). Similarly, even though USAGM stated its intent to continue broadcasting to Cuba, OCB stopped broadcasting between March 15–26, 2025. As of July 2026, OCB was operating at full-service—broadcasting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Additionally, USAGM's non-federal affiliates experienced lapses in broadcasting. A USAGM official stated that RFE/RL had to cease broadcasting in all 27 languages at some point in 2025, including services in Ukrainian and Russian during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine due to a lack of funding. RFE/RL returned to broadcasting 24 languages during 2026. Similarly, RFA ceased all radio and satellite transmissions at the end of March 2025 when USAGM halted its access to transmitters needed to carry programming, including transmissions to China. As of July 2026, RFA was broadcasting in seven languages. Additionally, a USAGM official stated that MBN halted its broadcasting in June 2025 and began to provide digital content services.

Figure 2 shows the change in number of broadcasting languages for some of USAGM-related broadcasting affiliates.

Figure 2: Change in Broadcasting Languages Offered by USAGM Grantees

Source: Generated by OIG from information obtained from USAGM.

Furthermore, USAGM employees interviewed by OIG detailed limitations in broadcasting capacity even after broadcasting activities resumed. For example, USAGM officials stated that when USAGM began broadcasting again in Persian, one of the two staff assigned to the broadcast service had no relevant language proficiency and was unable to broadcast. Additionally, USAGM officials stated that a producer for the Kurdish language broadcasting service was replaced with an employee who could not understand the language.

Before the reduction in operations, USAGM reported reaching more than 427 million unduplicated users, including users in countries with repressive leadership, such as Russia and Iran.⁴⁶ USAGM also reported that a high percentage of users found USAGM's programs to be credible and that the broadcasts helped users form opinions on important issues. As previously noted, USAGM cancelled activities related to tracking and reporting on its audience for broadcasting activities and the impact that USAGM's broadcasting had worldwide.

In July 2026, USAGM informed Congress about efforts to expand current levels of programming. For example, USAGM stated that it plans to expand Korean language programming to FY 2024 levels and expand Persian programming. Additionally, Russian programming is to be expanded as part of broader global coverage priorities. USAGM also informed Congress that VOA will continue to expand its global operations while reconstituting operations.

In addition to outward-facing services, USAGM's ability to provide internal services was significantly impacted by decisions made during the reduction in operations. For example,

⁴⁶ Appendix E includes a copy of USAGM's performance report from February 2025.

USAGM was unable to maintain its cybersecurity capabilities. A USAGM official explained that because of the RIF and cancellation of several IT-related contracts, IT security eroded and the agency no longer had the capability to effectively run the security operations center where 24-hour monitoring was performed to protect the agency against unauthorized presence, operate the service desk, or perform policy management. Furthermore, the official explained that the agency began restoring cybersecurity capabilities by reinitiating required contracts, using contractors, and hiring additional employees. As noted, in July 2026, USAGM informed Congress about efforts to augment cybersecurity staffing and re-acquire critical IT monitoring and defensive capabilities.

Strategic Workforce Planning



According to GAO, the heart of any serious change management initiative is people—because people define the organization’s culture, drive its performance, and embody its knowledge base. Moreover, “[f]ailure to adequately address—or often even consider—a wide variety of people and cultural issues can lead to unsuccessful change.”⁴⁷ GAO’s key practice for strategic workforce planning states, “Strategic workforce planning should precede any staff realignments or downsizing, so that changed staff levels do not inadvertently produce skills gaps or other adverse effects that could result in increased use of overtime and contracting.”⁴⁸

OIG found that USAGM could not demonstrate that it considered strategic workforce planning during its efforts to reduce operations. Specifically, other than the USAGM report to OMB providing limited information about USAGM’s understanding of the agency’s statutory minimum requirements, USAGM officials were unable to provide evidence of workforce planning performed to determine staffing needs before USAGM took actions to reduce its workforce. Several USAGM officials stated that they were not involved in determining staffing needs prior to employees being placed on administrative leave, RIF actions being taken, or PSC contracts being terminated. In some cases, USAGM officials stated that employees from U.S. DOGE Service provided the number of employees or a list of employees to retain without explanation. USAGM’s lack of strategic workforce planning is evidenced by the significant changes in staffing since March 2025.

For example, in its report to OMB in March 2025, USAGM stated that the agency had a total of 1,147 federal employees when E.O. 14238 was issued. According to USAGM, on March 15, 2025, 1 day after E.O. 14238 was issued, USAGM placed 994 federal employees on administrative leave, leaving 153 active federal employees at the agency. In its congressional notification dated June 3, 2025, USAGM proposed retaining 81 total positions, as detailed in Table 2.

⁴⁷ GAO-18-427, page 16.

⁴⁸ Ibid., page 18.

Table 2: USAGM Proposal for Retaining Positions After Reduction in Operations

Position	Number of Positions Retained
Senior Executive Service	13
Chief Executive Officer and Advisory Board Executive Secretary	1
Office of Cuba Broadcasting	33
VOA Farsi Language Broadcaster	2
VOA China Broadcaster	2
VOA Afghanistan Broadcaster	2
Other VOA Positions	11
Engineers/Transmission Support	2
Support	15
TOTAL	81

Source: USAGM congressional notification dated June 3, 2025, and USAGM report to OMB on the reduction in operations.

However, in a press release, dated June 20, 2025, USAGM stated that it had 250 remaining employees after sending RIF termination notices to 639 employees.⁴⁹ In August 2025, USAGM described its workforce to Congress as of August 29, 2025, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: USAGM Staffing Information as of August 29, 2025

Section	On Board	Administrative Leave	Accepted Buyout	Deferred Resignation Program	Separated	Total
VOA	86	512	83	110	66	857
OCB	31	2	1	7	13	54
USAGM	86	28	24	20	18	176
Technology, Services, & Innovation	51	34	12	24	10	131
Total	254	576	120	161	107	1,218

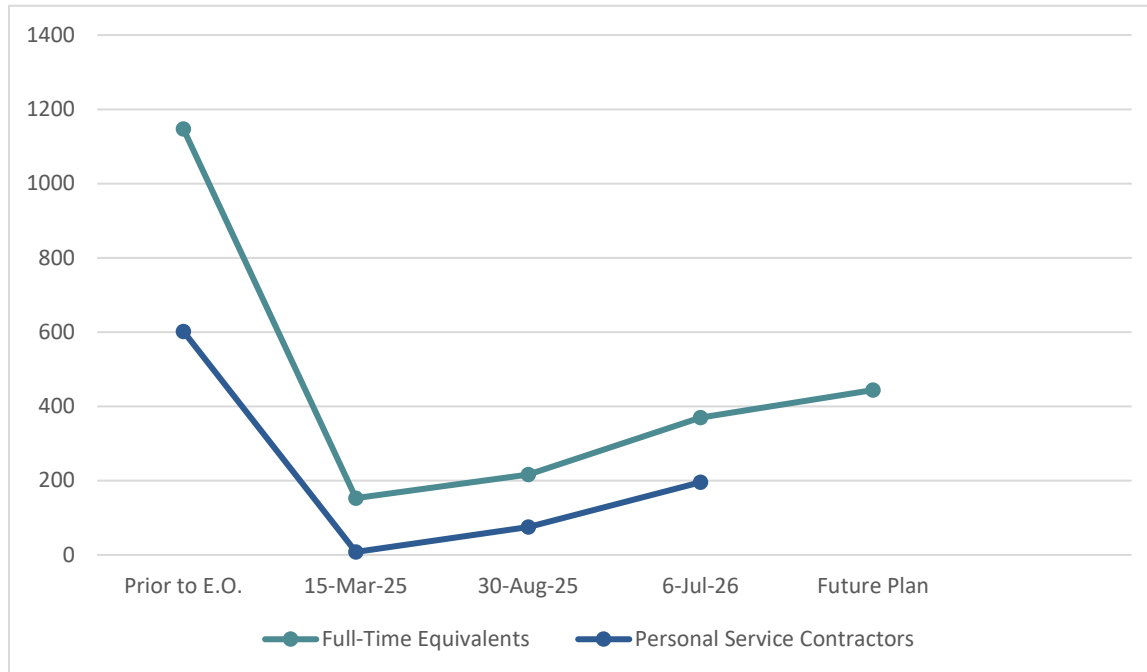
Source: Generated by OIG using information from USAGM's "Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff," August 30, 2025.

By July 6, 2026, USAGM reported having 370 full-time employees. USAGM officials stated that efforts to recall USAGM staff from administrative leave occurred on an ad hoc basis as agency needs were identified rather than based on strategic workforce planning. Based on a hiring plan that the Office of Personnel Management approved, USAGM planned to hire an additional 74 full-time employees, for a total of 444 full-time employees.

⁴⁹ The RIF termination notices were later rescinded due to errors.

Similarly, USAGM cancelled the contracts of 594 of the 602 PSCs on March 15, 2025. According to information USAGM provided to Congress, USAGM employed 75 PSCs by August 30, 2025. USAGM reported employing 196 PSCs by July 6, 2026. Figure 3 illustrates the details of the USAGM workforce trend.

Figure 3: USAGM Workforce Changes Since E.O. 14238 Issuance



Source: Generated by OIG based on a review of an undated USAGM report to OMB; USAGM, Congressional Notification Follow-Up (August 30, 2025); USAGM, Employee Roster as of July 6, 2026; and USAGM's, Hiring Plan.

OIG determined insufficient staffing was the cause of a number of deficiencies identified since USAGM's reduction in operations. For example, the audit of USAGM's financial statements determined that because of staff reductions, USAGM was unable to maintain key accounting processes and controls over accounting transactions or support the audit in a complete and timely manner.⁵⁰ Prior to reducing operations, USAGM had 34 active employees in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. As of July 2026, staffing in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer was 18 employees. A USAGM official stated that staffing in the office remains a challenge and that plans were being implemented to ensure sufficient control over accounting transactions in the future.

Similarly, OIG identified concerns related to accountability over property disposals and lease terminations that occurred primarily because of staffing reductions and organizational changes. For example, OIG reported that changes in agency leadership, including turnover in the Chief Financial Officer position, and shifting the responsibility for coordinating responses to the audit, contributed to delays in providing documentation. Prior to March 15, 2025, USAGM's property program was supported by a structure that included a designated Property Manager;

⁵⁰ AUD-FM-IB-26-10, *Report On Internal Control Over Financial Reporting*, page 3.

supervisors; and specialists responsible for inventory, management, and disposal activities. Following agency-wide RIFs, retirements, and reassignment actions, these formal positions were vacated, and the functions have since been performed by personnel serving in acting roles or assuming duties on an ad hoc basis.⁵¹

Additionally, auditors identified staffing as the cause of cybersecurity deficiencies identified during the annual audit of USAGM's cybersecurity program. For example, during the FY 2026 audit, USAGM officials stated that because of competing priorities for USAGM's limited resources, data protection and privacy-related⁵² initiatives were put on hold for some time. Furthermore, USAGM officials stated that vacancies in key leadership positions with responsibilities over enterprise risk management activities, including the Chief Risk Officer, impacted its cybersecurity program. The audit also found that USAGM personnel assigned responsibilities for configuration management⁵³ and contingency planning had to prioritize performing daily operational activities, such as end user device management. Some employees responsible for contingency planning activities returned to service in May 2026, after having been on administrative leave since March 2025.

USAGM also acknowledged that workforce reductions and staffing constraints impacted its ability to administer its internal control program.⁵⁴ Specifically, USAGM stated that it did not complete a comprehensive assessment of risk and internal control required by OMB Circular A-123. USAGM stated that it experienced significant workforce reductions and staffing constraints during the fiscal year, including the departure of personnel responsible for administering the internal control program. These staffing limitations affected USAGM's ability to conduct the required risk assessment and testing activities.⁵⁵

USAGM officials explained that future hiring needs have been based on input from USAGM employees, the agency's new understanding of the statutory minimum, and costs and benefits of language services. Although USAGM did not provide OIG with any documentation related to ongoing strategic workforce planning efforts, in July 2026, the agency informed Congress that it plans to reassess its staffing needs. Until that effort is complete, USAGM stated that it plans to increase the use of temporary contract support to address priority needs.

⁵¹ AUD-AFA-IB-26-16, page 8.

⁵² Data protection and privacy refer to activities focused on the confidentiality of electronic data, including maintaining restrictions on information access and protecting personal and proprietary information.

⁵³ National Institute of Standards and Technology, Special Publication 800-128, "Guide for Security-Focused Configuration Management of Information Systems," Section 2.1.1, page 4 (August 2011), states that configuration management relates to "a collection of activities focused on establishing and maintaining the integrity of . . . [software and hardware] systems through control of the processes for installing, initializing, changing, and monitoring the configuration of those . . . systems."

⁵⁴ GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (GAO-25-107721, May 2025), page 6, defines internal control as a process designed to provide reasonable assurance that the objective of an entity will be achieved.

⁵⁵ USAGM, *Agency Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2025*, page 9.

Defining the Parameters of the Executive Order

One reason for the deficiencies identified during this evaluation was that USAGM did not appropriately define the parameters of the instructions provided in E.O. 14238. As previously noted, E.O. 14238 required USAGM to eliminate the non-statutory components and functions to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law and stated that USAGM shall reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law. Additionally, the Executive order stated that the order should be implemented “consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, the Executive order required USAGM to submit a report to OMB within 7 days explaining what components or functions were statutorily required.

In accordance with the Executive order, USAGM provided a report to OMB describing its actions to comply with the Executive order.⁵⁷ USAGM also issued a congressional notification on its reduction in operations.⁵⁸ In these documents, USAGM describes statutory activities that it identified for continuation of operations. For example, USAGM stated that USAGM must have a Chief Executive Officer, and that VOA and OCB were required by statute. Additionally, USAGM concluded that “language services for China, Cuba, Afghanistan, and Farsi (Persia)” were statutorily required, but that it could eliminate other language services. Furthermore, USAGM concluded that Congress “specifically established radio and television services in law, as well as requirements to maintain certain transmission sites.” USAGM noted that because Congress appropriates specific levels of funding by grantee, grant terminations may need to be linked to a rescission package or other legal mechanism.

The primary focus of USAGM’s efforts to determine its statutory minimum posture was on a law related to international broadcasting – the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994. However, there are many other foundational laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies that do not appear to have been considered when USAGM made decisions on staffing requirements. The following are examples of the types of laws and regulations that are applicable to all agencies:

- Freedom of Information Act⁵⁹ – This act provides the public with the right to request access to records from any federal agency. It is often described as the law that keeps citizens in the know about their government.
- Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014⁶⁰ – Some of the areas addressed by this act include providing a comprehensive framework for ensuring the effectiveness of information security controls over information resources and effective government management and oversight of information security risk.

⁵⁶ E.O. 14238, § 2(a) and § 3(b).

⁵⁷ A copy of the report is included in Appendix B.

⁵⁸ A copy of the congressional notification is included in Appendix C.

⁵⁹ Codified at 5 U.S.C. § 552.

⁶⁰ Codified at 44 U.S.C. §§ 3551-3558.

- Privacy Act⁶¹ – This act prescribes how federal agency records with individually identifying information are to be stored, who may access such information, and when the government may use or disclose it.
- Federal Managers’ Financial Integrity Act⁶² – This act requires agencies establish and maintain a system of internal controls and to perform evaluations and issue reports about the adequacy of internal controls.
- OMB Circular A-11⁶³ – This circular provides guidance on preparing an agency’s budget and on budget execution.

Internal USAGM documentation from March 2025 related to the reduction in operations generally identified the existence of statutory and regulatory requirements that related to all agencies. However, USAGM did not demonstrate that it developed or considered a comprehensive list of administrative requirements in its efforts to reduce operations.

Defining Organizational Goals

Another reason for the deficiencies identified during this evaluation was that USAGM had not established organizational goals to align its remaining employees and resources toward a clear, shared objective. According to GAO, the basic question, regarding goals and outcomes for agency reform is “what is the agency trying to achieve with its reforms?”⁶⁴ GAO also states that “agreement on specific goals can help decision makers determine what problems genuinely need to be fixed, how to balance differing objectives, and what steps need to be taken to create, not just short-term advantages but long-term gains.”⁶⁵ E.O. 14238 required USAGM to “reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law.” However, according to USAGM’s FY 2026 Congressional Budget Justification, USAGM’s goal was not to reduce operations to USAGM’s statutory minimum requirement, but instead to perform “an orderly shutdown of USAGM operations.”⁶⁶

These competing goals resulted in contradictory decisions and actions during USAGM’s reduction of operations. For example, as detailed in other sections of this finding, USAGM cancelled contracts that were required to maintain ongoing operations and meet the agency’s statutory minimum requirements. Additionally, USAGM sent termination letters to grant recipients— including RFE/RL, RFA, and MBN—ordering them to cease any new programming costs, effectively halting broadcasting activities. Furthermore, USAGM disposed of equipment and two grantees (RFA and MBN) began auctioning off equipment needed for ongoing

⁶¹ Codified at 5 U.S.C. § 552a.

⁶² Codified at 31 U.S.C. §3512(c) and (d).

⁶³ OMB Circular A-11, “*Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*,” August 2025.

⁶⁴ GAO-18-427, page 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, page 9.

⁶⁶ USAGM, *FY 2026 Congressional Budget Justification*, page 3.

operations and broadcasting. These actions were not consistent or compatible with continuing USAGM operations at the statutory minimum requirements.

Although USAGM requested \$153 million for FY 2026 to shut down the agency, Congress appropriated \$643 million to USAGM for FY 2026 operations and the President signed this appropriation into law.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, actions taken in 2025 to dismantle the agency have impacted the organization's ability to meet its mission and operate effectively. USAGM officials described efforts to reverse initial actions taken by the organization. For example, USAGM renewed its relationship with grant recipients and began reinitiating cancelled contracts, hiring new employees, recalling employees from administrative leave, and purchasing new equipment.

However, it is essential for USAGM to establish organizational goals to align remaining employees and resources toward a clear, shared objective. This focus will assist USAGM in avoiding confusion and ensure that agency staff are working toward the same outcome. By setting organizational goals, USAGM will be able to maximize its impact and streamline decision-making, which is important when operating with limited resources.

Impact of USAGM's Reduction in Operations

The reduction in operations decreased USAGM's capacity to fulfill its core mission of informing, engaging, and connecting people worldwide in support of freedom and democracy. With fewer resources and diminished reach, USAGM is less effective at defending press freedom and providing accurate information in countries with repressive media environments. Additionally, decreasing the number of broadcasting languages may lessen USAGM's impact on advancing U.S. national interests, supporting democratic values, and countering disinformation in closed societies.

OIG has also reported about a decline in accountability since USAGM implemented its reform efforts. For example, audited financial statements provide independent assurance that an entity's financial records are accurate and reliable. However, for USAGM's FY 2025 financial statements, the independent auditor was unable to express an opinion on USAGM's financial statements (also known as a "disclaimer")⁶⁸ because of insufficient audit evidence related to significant line items including property, expenses (including payroll), and budgetary resources.⁶⁹ Delays in providing financial information decrease its relevance to end users, which include Congress, federal officials, and taxpayers.

⁶⁷ Public Law 119-75.

⁶⁸ USAGM received an unmodified (also known as a "clean" opinion) on its FY 2024 financial statements. OIG, *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media's FY 2024 and FY 2023 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-IB-25-03, November 2025), page 1.

⁶⁹ AUD-FM-IB-26-10, November 2025, *Independent Auditor's Report*, page 1, and *Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting*, pages 2-3.

Furthermore, OIG identified concerns with accountability over property disposals since FY 2025. To support its broadcasting operations, USAGM maintained a global network of facilities located in various countries and a wide range of technical personal property.⁷⁰ During FY 2025, USAGM reevaluated and consolidated facilities, broadcasting locations, and lease arrangements.⁷¹ However, USAGM could not provide OIG with documentation supporting the disposal of 1,512 (99 percent) of 1,531 selected items⁷² and provided only partial documentation supporting the disposal of the remaining 19 (1 percent) items.⁷³ Without complete and reliable records, transparency over property and lease management activities is reduced. This lack of documentation also increases the risk of unverified disposal activity and loss or mismanagement of agency assets.⁷⁴

Furthermore, USAGM's internal control program was limited during FY 2025. For example, the audit of USAGM's FY 2025 financial statements noted that USAGM did not comply with laws and regulations^{75,76} related to establishing and maintaining effective internal controls. USAGM officials stated that they did not perform internal control procedures as required because of uncertainties related to the status of the agency during FY 2025. Additionally, individuals who managed USAGM's internal control program separated from the organization during FY 2025. USAGM acknowledged the limitations of its internal control program⁷⁷ but stated that it was in the process of reinstating USAGM's internal control program and expected it to be in place during FY 2026.⁷⁸

OIG also identified an overall decline in USAGM's cybersecurity program.⁷⁹ Some of the areas that the independent audit identified a decline in controls included maintaining an inventory of USAGM's systems, managing IT security risks, and measuring the security posture of IT assets. Managing information security risks effectively is critical to achieving USAGM's mission. Until USAGM develops and implements an effective information security program, it will remain vulnerable to IT-focused attacks and threats to its critical, mission-related functions. In July 2026, USAGM informed Congress about efforts to expand current levels of operations.

⁷⁰ AUD-AFA-IB-26-16, page 1.

⁷¹ Ibid., page 2.

⁷² OIG selected a sample of 1,531 of 1,637 disposal transactions for testing.

⁷³ AUD-AFA-IB-26-16, page 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., page 9.

⁷⁵ Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act, codified at 31 U.S.C. § 3512(d).

⁷⁶ OMB Circular A-123, Appendix A, "Management of Reporting and Data Integrity Risk," June 6, 2018.

⁷⁷ USAGM, *Agency Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2025*, page 9.

⁷⁸ AUD-FM-IB-26-10, *Report On Compliance With Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements*, page 1.

⁷⁹ OIG is required by the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014, codified at 44 U.S.C. § 3555, to independently evaluate USAGM's information security program and practices annually.

To address the deficiencies identified in this report and in support of USAGM's efforts, OIG offers the following recommendations:⁸⁰

Recommendation 1: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) develop and implement a comprehensive plan to determine its statutory minimum requirements to implement Executive Order 14238. This effort should consider laws and regulations specific to USAGM, as well as laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies. Furthermore, when determining the languages in which to broadcast, USAGM should actively seek input from key stakeholders, including Congress, to ensure that considerations of national security and diplomacy are integrated into decision making.

Management Response: USAGM concurred with the recommendation, stating that it will assess government-wide legal and regulatory requirements applicable to all federal agencies. Additionally, USAGM stated that it is committed to providing required notifications to Congress.

OIG Reply: Based on USAGM's concurrence with the recommendation and stated actions, OIG considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action. This recommendation will be closed when OIG receives documentation demonstrating that USAGM developed and implemented a comprehensive plan to determine its statutory minimum requirements to implement E.O. 14238. This effort should consider laws and regulations specific to USAGM, as well as laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies. Furthermore, when determining the languages in which to broadcast, USAGM should actively seek input from key stakeholders, including Congress, to ensure that considerations of national security and diplomacy are integrated into decision making.

Recommendation 2: Following the implementation of Recommendation 1, OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) formally define its agency priority goals to focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results. The defined goals should be measurable, with specific targets, and should clearly connect with USAGM's core mission.

Management Response: USAGM concurred with the recommendation, stating that it will define its goals to focus on leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results.

OIG Reply: Based on USAGM's concurrence with the recommendation and stated actions, OIG considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action. This recommendation will be closed when OIG receives documentation demonstrating that USAGM formally defined its agency priority goals to focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results. The defined goals should be measurable, with specific targets, and should clearly connect with USAGM's core mission.

⁸⁰ OIG is not offering recommendations related to operational issues identified because of open recommendations from related reports, including AUD-AFA-IB-26-16 and *Audit of the U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2025 Information Security Program* (AUD-IT-IB-25-33, September 2025).

Recommendation 3: Following the implementation of Recommendation 2, OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media develop a strategic plan in compliance with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024, that reflects the agency's shift in goals since the issuance of Executive Order 14238. At a minimum, the strategic plan should include actions planned to achieve the goals and key performance indicators.

Management Response: USAGM concurred with the recommendation, stating that it already developed an internal draft strategic plan and will continue to develop and update the strategic plan.

OIG Reply: Based on USAGM's concurrence with the recommendation and stated actions, OIG considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action. This recommendation will be closed when OIG receives documentation demonstrating that USAGM developed a strategic plan in compliance with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024, that reflects the agency's shift in goals since the issuance of E.O. 14238. At a minimum, the strategic plan should include actions planned to achieve the goals and key performance indicators.

Recommendation 4: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media perform a comprehensive strategic workforce planning effort to align staffing resources, including personal services contractors, to agency-defined goals (Recommendation 2) and strategic plans (Recommendation 3). At a minimum, the strategic workforce planning effort should ensure the continuity of critical functions (both internal support functions and broadcasting-related) and identify strategies to effectively address skill gaps identified during the planning effort.

Management Response: USAGM concurred with the recommendation, stating that it will conduct a comprehensive strategic workforce planning effort to align its staffing resources with the Agency's defined goals. Additionally, USAGM noted that it is already working closely with managers to recall personnel from administrative leave and is currently hiring under a hiring plan developed in close coordination with Agency leadership.

OIG Reply: Based on USAGM's concurrence with the recommendation and stated actions, OIG considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action. This recommendation will be closed when OIG receives documentation demonstrating that USAGM performed a comprehensive strategic workforce planning effort to align staffing resources to agency-defined goals and strategic plans.

Recommendation 5: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media establish a dedicated implementation team responsible for coordinating, executing, and monitoring agency reform efforts.

Management Response: USAGM concurred with the recommendation, stating that it is engaging stakeholders, assessing workforce needs, and planning for the future.

OIG Reply: Based on USAGM's concurrence with the recommendation and stated actions, OIG considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action. This recommendation will be closed when OIG receives documentation demonstrating that USAGM has established an implementation team responsible for coordinating, executing, and monitoring agency reform efforts.

Recommendation 6: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media develop a communication strategy to effectively convey its updated mission, goals, objectives, and the rationale behind its broadcasting decisions to internal and external stakeholders.

Management Response: USAGM concurred with the recommendation, stating that it has consistently worked to improve its communication over the past 6 months. Additionally, USAGM stated that it is in weekly contact with its internal and external stakeholders.

OIG Reply: Based on USAGM's concurrence with the recommendation and stated actions, OIG considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action. This recommendation will be closed when OIG receives documentation demonstrating that USAGM developed a communication strategy to effectively convey its updated mission, goals, objectives, and the rationale behind its broadcasting decisions to internal and external stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) develop and implement a comprehensive plan to determine its statutory minimum requirements to implement Executive Order 14238. This effort should consider laws and regulations specific to USAGM, as well as laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies. Furthermore, when determining the languages in which to broadcast, USAGM should actively seek input from key stakeholders, including Congress, to ensure that considerations of national security and diplomacy are integrated into decision making.

Recommendation 2: Following the implementation of Recommendation 1, OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) formally define its agency priority goals to focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results. The defined goals should be measurable, with specific targets, and should clearly connect with USAGM's core mission.

Recommendation 3: Following the implementation of Recommendation 2, OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media develop a strategic plan in compliance with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024, that reflects the agency's shift in goals since the issuance of Executive Order 14238. At a minimum, the strategic plan should include actions planned to achieve the goals and key performance indicators.

Recommendation 4: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media perform a comprehensive strategic workforce planning effort to align staffing resources, including personal services contractors, to agency-defined goals (Recommendation 2) and strategic plans (Recommendation 3). At a minimum, the strategic workforce planning effort should ensure the continuity of critical functions (both internal support functions and broadcasting-related) and identify strategies to effectively address skill gaps identified during the planning effort.

Recommendation 5: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media establish a dedicated implementation team responsible for coordinating, executing, and monitoring agency reform efforts.

Recommendation 6: OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media develop a communication strategy to effectively convey its updated mission, goals, objectives, and the rationale behind its broadcasting decisions to internal and external stakeholders.

APPENDIX A: PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed this evaluation to determine whether the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) applied key practices when it reduced operations in response to Executive Order (E.O.) 14238.¹

OIG conducted this evaluation from June to August 2026 in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The scope of this evaluation was USAGM's efforts to reform and reorganize the agency in response to E.O. 14238. OIG conducted this evaluation in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. These standards require that OIG plan and perform the evaluation to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the evaluation objective. OIG believes that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the evaluation objective.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) compiled key practices and questions to be considered in agency reform efforts based on its past work. Specifically, GAO identified 4 broad categories for assessing agency reforms that comprise 58 key questions.² Although USAGM performed its efforts to reduce its operations in response to an Executive order, its efforts included major transformations and staff reductions, which are all considered in GAO's key questions to assess the development and implementation of agency reform efforts. OIG selected the following six key questions to assess USAGM's efforts to reduce operations in compliance with E.O. 14238:

- To what extent has the agency considered the likely costs and benefits of the proposed reforms?
- What data and evidence has the agency used to develop and justify its proposed reforms?
- How, if at all, were the results of the agency's strategic review process used to help guide the proposed reforms?
- Has the agency established a dedicated implementation team that has the capacity, including staffing, resources, and change management, to manage the reform process?
- Has the agency ensured their continued delivery of services during reform implementation?
- To what extent has the agency conducted strategic workforce planning to determine whether it will have the resources and capacity needed, including the skills and competencies, in place for the proposed reforms or reorganization?

To assess USAGM's efforts to reduce operations in response to E.O. 14238, OIG obtained information and documentation and conducted interviews with officials from USAGM's Office

¹ E.O. 14238, Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy, March 14, 2025.

² GAO, *Government Reorganization: Key Questions to Assess Agency Reform Efforts*, pages 7 and 8-19 (GAO-18-427, June 2018).

of the General Counsel; Office of Human Resources; Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation; Office of Management Services; Office of Policy and Research; and Voice of America.

Prior Office of Inspector General Reports

Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media's FY 2025 Financial Statements (AUD-FM-IB-26-10, February 2026)

The independent auditor engaged to audit USAGM's FY 2025 financial statements did not express an opinion on the financial statements. The basis for the disclaimer of opinion was the material impact of the reduction of force following E.O. 14238 on USAGM's reporting environment. Specifically, the independent auditor reported that USAGM was unable to sufficiently respond to financial statement audit requests. As a result, the independent auditor issued a disclaimer of opinion on USAGM's financial statements because it was unable to obtain sufficient, appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion that the financial statements.

Audit of Selected Property Disposals and Lease Terminations at the U.S. Agency for Global Media (AUD-AFA-IB-26-16, July 2026)

OIG reported that it was unable to determine whether USAGM's property disposal and lease management actions complied with applicable requirements because the agency did not consistently maintain or provide documentation supporting those activities. Specifically, OIG found that USAGM did not have an operational property management system for at least 7 months during 2025 and was still reconciling property records to add data to a newly identified tracking solution when the audit was published. Additionally, USAGM could not provide any documentation supporting the disposal of 1,512 (99 percent) of the 1,531 selected items and provided only partial documentation supporting the disposal of 19 selected items. Furthermore, USAGM did not provide documentation responsive to audit requests related to lease management, including records identifying lease terminations or decisions regarding expiring leases during the audit scope period. These issues occurred primarily because of staffing reductions and organizational changes, as well as the termination of USAGM's property management system. OIG made six recommendations in the report to improve internal controls involving property management. As of August 2026, five recommendations remain resolved, pending further action, and one recommendation remains unresolved.

APPENDIX B: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ON ACTIONS TAKEN TO COMPLY WITH EXECUTIVE ORDER 14238



U.S. AGENCY FOR
GLOBAL MEDIA

UNITED STATES
BROADCASTING
BOARD OF
GOVERNORS

330 Independence Avenue SW | Washington, DC 20237 | usagm.gov

Director Russell Vought
Office of Management and Budget

Director Vought:

Pursuant to the Executive Order on “Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy” (March 14, 2025), President Trump directed that “the non-statutory components and functions of [the United States Agency for Global Media] shall be eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law.” The President further directed that USAGM shall reduce the performance if its “statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law.”

Actions Taken

The day after we issued issuance of the March 14 Executive Order, we took aggressive and immediate steps to comply with the Executive Order:

Grantees

- Termination letters were sent to USAGM’s grantees on March 15: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Radio Free Asia; Middle East Broadcasting Network; Open Technology Fund and Frontline Media Fund.
- USAGM ordered grant recipients to cease making any payments to carry out the grant agreement with USAGM effective March 15, 2025. Any new grant programming costs incurred after that date will be unallowable, except as part of 2 CFR 200 closeout requirements. All closeout activities must be completed no later than 120 days from the notification of termination.

USAGM Domestic Operations

- USAGM placed 994 out of 1,147 federal employees on administrative leave on March 15, 2025. The agency also cancelled 594 Personal Service Contracts (PSCs), with final payments required through March 31, 2025.
- USAGM began our formal engagement with Office of Personnel Management to allow for expeditious Reduction in Force. We are finalizing retention registers, competitive areas, in an effort to issue RIF notices as soon as possible.
- USAGM immediately stopped all relevant news-gathering functions, shutting down content uploads to relevant USAGM distribution platforms and distribution to satellite channels.

Voice of America | Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty | Office of Cuba Broadcasting | Radio Free Asia | Middle East Broadcasting

- The Contracting office began terminating, for convenience, a preponderance of contracts.
- USAGM's senior adviser Kari Lake consulted with Department of State officials on the relevant matters meeting USAGM's consultation requirement on language services and other related logistical issues.
- USAGM shut down relevant radio transmissions.

USAGM Overseas Operations

- USAGM shut off radio transmissions at the following sites: Thailand (two sites); Botswana; Philippines, and Germany (two sites). Television transmission remain at this time.

Proposed Reductions Under the Executive Order and Next Steps

- We have determined that the statute provides that there must be a Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, VOA as a subagency, and OCB.
- No subcomponents are necessary or required. We are taking steps to eliminate all subcomponents of USAGM, VOA, and OCB. Following your office's review and feedback on our plan, we will provide any needed Congressional consultations and notification and other requirements before finalizing changes.
- USAGM career staff including the acting CEO, CFO, GC, head of HR, head of OMR, and head of TSI, signed off on the reduction plan provided to OPM and believe that language services for China, Cuba, Afghanistan, and Farsi (Persia) are specifically statutorily required by law, but that USAGM has discretion, after consultation with the Department of State, to eliminate all other language services.
- There are issues we are working through regarding appropriations including the FY 2025 Appropriations which also carries forward requirements to maintain previous year levels of broadcasting for Tibet and North Korea. Noting this, Congress has not established in the International Broadcasting Act any minimum broadcasting commitments.
- Regarding OCB, Congress has specifically established radio and television services in law, as well as requirements to maintain certain transmission sites. Accordingly, we will continue OCB operations at a level in which is determined to be sufficient.
- Regarding grants administered by USAGM, we face unique challenges as Congress appropriates specific levels by grantee. Terminations may need to be linked to a rescission package or other legal mechanisms. We are exploring other options. (Note: RFE/RL and OTF have filed separate complaints and motions for temporary restraining orders; we are working with the Department of Justice. RFA has filed an administrative appeal.)

Other Non-Statutory Requirements

- As part of the elimination of language services and staff to support engineering, USAGM will need to decommission or transfer some or all of the Agency's remote monitoring sites and transmission sites. The decommissioning and termination of land and broadcasting agreements managed by the Department of State will require further planning.
- Currently, the Agency is party to numerous C-175 agreements about broadcasting and operation of transmission sites, broadcasting stations, and other facilities that will need to be modified or terminated. During this decommissioning phase, USAGM will need to ensure the orderly shutdown of any agreements, the related sites, and any locally employed staff. USAGM will work with the Department of State to ensure that all local laws and U.S. agreements are met during this period.

Future State

- To comply with the Executive Order, which provides for maximum reduction consistent with the law, USAGM proposes to retain a staff around 81 people, including 33 at Radio/TV Marti in Miami, FL and the CEO role.
- Programming from Miami will be renamed Voice of America: Radio Marti or Voice of America: Cuba Broadcasting. The Marathon, Fla., transmitting station will operate to broadcast to Cuba on the 1180 AM frequency.
- Voice of America (VOA) will create content in line with statutory minimums.
- USAGM will modernize and streamline its messaging to the world, to fulfill the mission and tell America's story.
- VOA will broadcast to China, Afghan and Iran in Farsi. A two-person staff will be assigned to each service. VOA will have an additional 11 positions to these.
- There will be 15 back-office positions, 2 engineering and transmission positions, and 13 Senior Executive Service positions across the organization. Back-office support will provide administrative support to VOA and OCB, and to assist with a transition from the prior state of the agency to a significantly smaller presence at USAGM, VOA, and OCB, as directed by the President.

APPENDIX C: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION FROM JUNE 2025



U.S. AGENCY FOR
GLOBAL MEDIA

330 Independence Avenue SW | Washington, DC 20237 | usagm.gov

June 3, 2025

The Honorable Senator Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Senator Graham:

In compliance with the Executive Order (EO) on “Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy” (March 14, 2025), President Trump directed that “the non-statutory components and functions of [the United States Agency for Global Media] shall be eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law.” The President further directed that USAGM shall reduce the performance if its “statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law.”

A plan was developed by senior career USAGM leadership who assessed what the statutory minimum is and signed-off on it; career agency staff like General Counsel Royce Min with over 20-years-experience as a federal government attorney; acting-CEO Victor Morales, a 36-year veteran at Voice of America; Chief Financial Officer Roman Napoli, with over 20-years-experience at USAID and Department of State; also the Directors of Human Resources; Office of Management; and Office of Technology Services and Innovation, all signed-off on the USAGM Statutory Minimum Memorandum. (Please see enclosed.)

While we anticipate being **above** the originally proposed statutory minimum staffing numbers, the plan to effectuate the President’s Executive Order is still developing. As we work to adhere to the EO, please consider this the required Congressional Notification to satisfy notice for the potential reorganization, consolidations, and/or program terminations.

For questions related to this Congressional Notification, please contact me.

Sincerely,

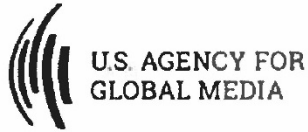
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kari Lake".

Kari Lake

Senior Advisor to the Chief Operating Officer

Enclosure: USAGM Stat Min





Office of CEO at USAGM,

Executive Summary - Recommendation

Based on the President's Executive Order, the recommendation is to retain all positions in the Miami, FL and Marathon, FL competitive areas (33 positions) based on the statutory requirements for Cuba broadcasting.

We also recommend retaining the following non-SES positions from the Washington, D.C. competitive area totaling an additional 35 positions:

- CEO & Advisory Board Executive Secretary: 1 position
- Farsi Language: 2 positions
- China Broadcasting: 2 positions
- Afghanistan: 2 positions
- VOA: 11 positions
- Engineering & Transmission: 2 positions
- Back Office Support: 15 positions

All other positions would be terminated. This would leave USAGM with 68 positions. This does not include current SES staff of ~13, bringing the grand total to 81.

As a part of this process, USAGM should engage with the State Department based on the deletion of language services.

Background & Context

On March 14, 2025 the President signed the Executive Order Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy that orders USAGM to eliminate the non-statutory components and functions and reduce the performance of the statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence required by law.

The purpose of this memo is to tie the guidance above to the number of specific USAGM employee positions needed within our competitive areas. Out of scope is positions for non-USAGM employees.

Competitive Areas

Competitive Area	Number	% of Total
Washington, DC	936	90.6%
Miami, FL	32	3.1%
Other USA	27	2.6%
New York, NY	13	1.3%
Greenville, N.C.	7	0.7%
TIHAN, MARIANA ISL, NORTHERN MARIANA IS	1	0.1%
BANGKOK, THAILAND	2	0.2%
THANG ISLAND, PHILIPPINES	2	0.2%
SEOUL, KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	1	0.1%
Marathon, FL	1	0.1%
CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA	1	0.1%
ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN	1	0.1%
ISTANBUL, TURKEY	1	0.1%
BOTSWANA	1	0.1%
UDOH THAN, UDORH, THAILAND	1	0.1%
Nairobi, KENYA	1	0.1%
WARSAW, POLAND	1	0.1%
FRANKFURT, GERMANY	1	0.1%
KUWAIT	1	0.1%
SELEBI PHIKWE, BOTSWANA	1	0.1%
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE	1	0.1%
Total	1,033	100.0%

The total number is subject to change but is current as of this writing.

See below for the employees tied what statute (focused on 22 USC 71 and 22 USC 18) states USAGM shall do.

Positions

- CEO & Advisory Board Executive Secretary: 1 position
 - 'The head of the United States Agency for Global Media shall be a Chief Executive Officer...'
 - 'The Chief Executive Officer shall, from within existing United States Agency for Global Media personnel, provide the Advisory Board with an Executive Secretary...'
 - The two positions are being combined to a single person
- Head of Voice of America: 1 position (SES)
 - 'The heads of Voice of America, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting...may only be appointed or removed if such action has been approved by a majority vote of the Advisory Board'
- Head of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting: 1 position (SES)
 - 'The Broadcasting Board of Governors shall appoint a head of the Service...'

Functions

- Voice of America Broadcast Operations, VOA News Center & FM Programming: 11 positions
 - 'The Voice of America shall devote programming each day to broadcasting information on the individual States of the United States. The broadcasts shall include...information on the products, tourism, and cultural and educational facilities of each State...information on the potential trade with each State...discussion with State officials...'
 - Section 6202: 'United States international broadcasting shall...not duplicate the activities of private United States broadcasters...not duplicate the activities of government supported broadcasting entities of other democratic nations'
 - 'The Chief Executive Officer shall have the following authorities...To ensure that United States international broadcasting is conducted in accordance with the standards and principles contained in section 6202 of this title.'

- The Voice of America functional requirement and scope is duplicative with the activities of private United States broadcasters, but we will retain positions in case there are needs
- Engineering & Transmissions: 2 positions
 - Although not specified in statute, we will retain positions in case there are needs
- Annual Report: 0 positions
 - 'To submit to the President and the Congress an annual report...'
 - The previous statutory positions mentioned can cover this statutory requirement
- Farsi Language: 2 positions
 - 'To submit to the President and the Congress an annual report...'
- China Broadcast: 2 positions
 - '...a new broadcasting service to the People's Republic of China...'
- Afghanistan: 2 positions
 - '...such broadcasting services shall be known as "Radio Free Afghanistan".'
- Cuba Broadcasting: 33 positions
 - '...shall provide for the open communication of information and ideas through the use of radio broadcasting to Cuba...'
 - '...shall utilize the broadcasting facilities located at Marathon, Florida, and the 1180 AM frequency...'
 - '...shall be designated "Voice of America: Cuba Service" or "Voice of America: Radio Marti program".'
- Back Office Support: 15 positions
 - Human Resources: 2 Positions
 - Contracting: 2 Positions
 - Finance: 2 Positions
 - Legal: 5 Positions
 - Information Technology: 2 Positions
 - Security: 2 Positions
 - Although not statutorily required, they will enable to ongoing operations of USAGM

Stakeholder	Function	Clearance
Royce Min	Legal	
Victor Morales	Acting CEO	
Roman Napoli,	CFO	

Roman G Napoli
Digitally signed by Roman G Napoli
 Date: 2025.03.18 12:38:51 -04'00'

Crystal Thomas HR Director

Christopher A. Luer CMO, Acting

Terry Balazs, Director, TSI

Crystal Thomas
Christopher A. Luer
Terry Balazs

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THE U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA PROVIDED TO CONGRESS IN AUGUST 2025

Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff August 30, 2025

I. Senate Appropriations - Majority

1. *Can you provide an update on how USAGM is currently tracking and validating its global audience reach, including any recent data on audience size, engagement metrics, and demographic breakdowns by region or platform? Additionally, what is USAGM's current plan for utilizing this information to inform content strategy, resource allocation, and performance evaluation across its networks? Please include any internal or third-party methodologies being used to ensure accuracy, and how these metrics inform your strategic planning, especially given the administration's emphasis on effectiveness and statutory compliance.*

Answer: USAGM has for years largely relied upon social media metrics in countries where current content delivery occurs via the internet and social media platforms. USAGM's most recent annual report, which contains a snapshot of metrics but is unfortunately from 2022, can be found [here](#). We are in the process of developing a more in-depth view of social media platform-based metrics that we can share with Congress and the general public going forward, and will inform you when it is ready for sharing.

As a reminder, because much of USAGM's current broadcasting is focused on locations where there are tyrannical regimes and closed media environments, more traditional tools of measuring audience, such as polling, are unavailable. Hard metrics are also unavailable for content that is broadcast via medium wave and shortwave radio transmissions. USAGM is happy to provide updates to our abilities to communicate and measure audience metrics as we obtain informational updates or as metrics improve.

2. *Please provide the plan that "was developed by senior career USAGM leadership who assessed what the statutory minimum is" according to the CN dated June 3, 2025.*

Answer: Your office has already received the plan, which was included with the June 3, 2025, congressional notification (CN) regarding the statutory minimum requirement. We are reattaching that plan for your convenience. As previously discussed, that plan was based on both input from USAGM's Office of General Counsel and input from senior career agency officials with more than a century of combined relevant experience. Please note that while the plan that was provided with the CN reflects USAGM's assessment of what statutory minimum functionality looks like, USAGM may carry out programming above statutory minimum levels to achieve the mission on an as-needed basis, using full-time employees or contractors.

3. *In addition to Alex's first question on direction and criteria specified by OMB and political officials at USAGM regarding developing the statutory minimums, please provide the rationale and documentation for USAGM's deviations from that statutory minimum framework, i.e. engineering, transmissions, and back office support.*

Answer: As discussed above in the answer to Question 2, USAGM may use full-time employees or contractors to help carry out programming that is above statutory minimum levels to achieve the mission on an as-needed basis. For example, USAGM currently has approximately 216 full-time employees and approximately 75 contractors, for a combined

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

agency team size of approximately 291. Please note that these numbers are approximate because the given level of both full-time employees and contractors shift daily due to a combination of both departing full-time employees and adjustments in contractor levels. These active full-time employees and contractors fulfill the spectrum of functions, including content production, engineering, transmitting, and administrative needs.

4. *Under the statutory minimum document, which office or position within USAGM has been designated as responsible for preparing and submitting the required annual report to Congress?*

Answer: Section 305(a)(9) of the International Broadcasting Act of 1994, as amended, requires the USAGM Chief Executive Officer to submit the annual report to the President and Congress.

5. *Please provide a detailed update on the CNMI Transmitting station, as the CN notes continued staffing of at least one USAGM staff. The Congressional Notification dated June 11, 2024, outlined the initial phase of closure, which was expected to incur additional costs. How do current plans align with that prior notification, and what are the estimated cost implications?*

Answer: USAGM anticipates no new financial obligations for CNMI operations. One staff member will remain onsite until final handover activities are completed, which is targeted to occur no later than September 30, 2025. All USAGM program transmissions from the station ceased in July 2024, so broadcasting from the station is now no longer possible. The CNMI Transmitting Station consisted of two sites, Saipan and Tinian, both of which are being transferred to the Department of Defense (DOD). The United States Navy (USN) has assumed responsibility for the Saipan site, while the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is assuming responsibility for the Tinian site.

- Saipan Site: the Saipan site lease was formally handed over to USN in June 2025. USAGM is helping to orient USN personnel to the site and preparing to transfer to USN the remainder of USAGM's expendable and non-expendable property, scheduled for completion by September 30, 2025.
 - Tinian Site: Under an existing memorandum of agreement (MOA) with DOD, USMC is assuming responsibility for the Tinian site. USAGM has completed virtually all site decommissioning activities, save the dismantling and shipping of two broadcast transmitters for reuse at our Philippines Transmitting Station, which will remain operational. This shipment and the transfer of USAGM's remaining property to USMC is expected to conclude no later than September 30, 2025. Once DOD formally requests USAGM to terminate the MOA, the station will be officially closed.
6. *The USAGM heading in division F of P.L. 118-47, carried forward by the FY25 CR, requires USAGM to notify Congress of the significant modification of broadcast hours, based on the hours previously justified to Congress. Are you planning to send this CN? If not, why not?*

Answer: The Agency will submit this CN at a later date.

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

Provided further, that significant modifications to USAGM broadcast hours previously justified to Congress, including changes to transmission platforms (shortwave, medium wave, satellite, Internet, and television), for all USAGM language services shall be subject to the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations:

7. *The June 3rd CN (signed on March 18th) notes that “USAGM should engage with the State Department based on the deletion of language services.” Please provide further detail on these engagements, including which language services were discussed, what input was received from the State Department, and the outcomes of those consultations.*

Answer: The Agency has plans for engagement with the Department of State about these matters.

8. *In light of recent events and increased demand for coverage, particularly the surge in VOA Persian Service activity, what is the plan moving forward for these staff and for the transmissions and content?*

Answer: As discussed above in the answers to Question 2 and 3, USAGM reserves the right to use full-time employees or contractors above statutory minimum levels to achieve the mission on an as-needed basis. With respect to the Persian News Network’s efforts, staff and content will continue to fluctuate as urgency of global events dictate.

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

Senate Appropriations - Minority

1. *In the briefing, USAGM stated that it was OMB's direction to ignore requirements in appropriations law when developing the statutory minimums as directed by the Executive Order, and in the agency's decision not to consult with the appropriate congressional committees prior to submitting the June 3 reorganization documents as required by law. Please provide the criteria specified by OMB and political officials at USAGM when developing the statutory minimums.*

Answer: As discussed during our in-person briefing on or about July 2, 2025, USAGM staff conveyed to Committee staff that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is part of the Executive Office of the President, is the office with primary responsibility for both establishing presidential budget priorities and conveying those priorities to members of Congress and congressional committees. We would again encourage you to reach out directly to OMB staff for the desired information. Please see OMB's contact information [here](#).

2. *Section 1113 of the FY25 full-year CR requires agencies to submit operating plans by April 29. We have not received USAGM's operating plan and have previously asked for this document in email communications on June 2 and again on June 11.*

Answer: The summarized Program Plan was attached to the CN that was sent to the Committee on June 20, 2025.

3. *Please provide the FY26 CBJ for USAGM.*

Answer: USAGM's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Congressional Budget Justification is available to the public and can be found [here](#).

4. *Section 7050(b) in division F of P.L. 118-47, carried forward by the FY25 CR requires the USAGM CEO, in consultation with the President of OTF, to submit an internet freedom spend plan. This plan was due on June 13. Has USAGM consulted with OTF on the plan and when does the agency plan to submit the spend plan?*

(b) COORDINATION AND SPEND PLANS.—After consultation among the relevant agency heads to coordinate and de-conflict planned activities, but not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Agency for Global Media, in consultation with the President of the Open Technology Fund, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations spend plans for funds made available by this Act for programs to promote Internet freedom globally, which shall include a description of safeguards established by relevant agencies to ensure that such programs are not used for illicit purposes: Provided, That the Department of State spend plan shall include funding for all such programs for all relevant Department of State and United States Agency for International Development offices and bureaus.

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

Answer: USAGM is currently in the process of drafting an updated internet freedom spend plan, and we anticipate sharing this plan with your Committee no later than September 30, 2025. We will reach out to your Committee in the event there is any change in that delivery timeline. With regard to the Open Technology Fund (OTF), USAGM personnel engage minimally with OTF personnel because of OTF's ongoing litigation against USAGM.

5. *Section 7043(e)(2) in division F of P.L. 118-47 requires USAGM to broadcast into North Korea at levels not less than the prior fiscal year. How many hours per week is USAGM broadcasting to North Korea as of July 3, 2025 as compared to the same point in time last year?*

(2) BROADCASTS.—Funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “International Broadcasting Operations” shall be made available to maintain broadcasting hours into North Korea at levels not less than the prior fiscal year.

Answer: At present, USAGM is not broadcasting any content via any medium into the Communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). That said, USAGM has decided to take steps to restart broadcasting into the DPRK. We will notify the Committee as soon as possible regarding this restoration.

6. *In testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Senior Advisor Lake indicated there were instances where USAGM entities had not adhered to principles and standards in the International Broadcasting Act. Did USAGM initiate a process to review such instances and have determinations been made? Noting that the agency is required to notify the Committee within 15 days of any such determinations. Are you planning to submit such notifications?*

Answer: During Ms. Lake's testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on June 25, 2025, she identified numerous troubling instances in USAGM's past that ran afoul of the Voice of America's statutory commitments, including during the tenure of the immediate prior CEO Amanda Bennett. Hearing testimony about these instances, almost all of which occurred prior to the current Administration, can be found [here](#).

Going forward, USAGM leadership intends to both keep a very close eye on agency operations and broadcast content and flag any future instances of illegal, dangerous, or otherwise inappropriate conduct by any of our personnel, as appropriate, for your Committee as they develop. USAGM will also work with officials from other agencies, including law enforcement, as necessary.

7. *The FY22 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL 117-103) requires the agency to report every 120 on Ukraine supplemental funding until the balances have been expended. Per the November 4th report, the agency still had unexpended balances. Please provide an update whether the agency has any unexpended balances and plans to submit the next 120 day report (which was due in April).*

Answer: To date, USAGM has been providing information to the Department of State's Office of Inspector General (OIG) for their quarterly reports on Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR). The last data was provided for their third quarter report (which can be found [here](#)),

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

and updated data will be provided for their fourth quarter report. In addition to current practice, USAGM will take additional steps to address this requirement more directly with Congress going forward to ensure that Congress has the latest information. For your awareness, our current estimate is that a little more than \$1 million remains of the funds available to USAGM pursuant to OAR.

8. *Grant agreements: Please specify how the grant agreements the agency was trying to negotiate with the grantees earlier this year differ from the terms of the grant agreement in fiscal year 2024. If there are different requirements, please explain the intent behind the different requirements.*

Answer: The revised grant agreements that USAGM presented to the non-federal grantee organizations earlier this year provided, among other changes, greater oversight and transparency of USAGM's grantees, which is vital in light of the fact that they have collectively received billions of taxpayer-funded dollars since their respective inceptions yet have been largely unaccountable to those same taxpayers. Specific proposed new provisions, which will be part of all future grant agreements and fully align with Administration directives and responsibilities, include provisions that would tighten reporting timelines, revise financial plan details, and clarify fundraising and lobbying prohibitions. All of these potential changes were focused on ensuring appropriate use of federal funding and preventing misuse of federal funding. We consider the non-federal grantee organizations' rejection of these revised grant agreements to raise major concerns about their current activities.

9. *As of July 3, 2025, how many hours is the Kuwait transmitting station broadcasting USAGM content as compared to the same time last year?*

Answer: In July 2024, the Kuwait Transmitting Station was broadcasting an average of about 100 hours of programming on a typical day (i.e., one medium wave antenna array and multiple shortwave antenna arrays were broadcasting a combined total of 100 hours of programming in several directions). Currently, the Kuwait Transmitting Station broadcasts 30 minutes per day into Afghanistan.

10. *As of July 3, please provide a staffing chart by federal entity (VOA, OCB, TSI, Mission Support) that identifies the number of employees who are working full-time, the number of employees on administrative leave, and the number who have taken DRP or voluntary retirement. As a baseline, please provide the personnel numbers by category as of January 2025.*

Answer: Please see the below table, which reflects the current status of all USAGM full-time employees broken down by the requested components as of August 29, 2025, and in comparison to the total as of January 2025:

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

Entity	Active	Admin Leave	Buyout	DRP	Separated	Total
VOA	86	512	83	110	66	857
OCB	31	2	1	7	13	54
USAGM	86	28	24	20	18	176
TSI	51	34	12	24	10	131
Total	254	576	120	161	107	1,218

11. How much FY25 funding currently allocated for Mission Support is available as of July 3?

Answer: The total planned allocation for Mission Support is \$243,073,000, which matches the information provided via CN on June 20, 2025. All of this funding is available for mission-oriented purposes on an as-needed basis for administrative and management services, among other needs.

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

House Appropriations - Majority

1. *For June 3 CN: An updated breakout of the 209 and expected 170 according to the function and position as appropriate in comparison to the numbers presented in the document.*

Answer: Below is an update of USAGM's approximate level of full-time employees by component as of August 13, 2025:

- Broadcast Operations, Central Production Services, Traffic Branch/Traffic Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Central Production Services, Traffic Branch/Television Operations Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Central Production Services, Product Support Branch, Video Editors Services: 1
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division: 1
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division, Radio Multimedia: 5
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division, Television Operations/Master Control Services: 4
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division, Television Operations/Studio Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Technical Support Division: 1
- Broadcast Operations, Technical Support Division, Television Maintenance Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Digital Management Division: 3
- Broadcast Operations, Digital Media Support: 4
- FM Programming: 1
- VOA News Center: 1
- VOA News Center, Coverage Desk: 1
- VOA News Center, Real Time News Desk: 3
- Africa Division: 4 (currently detailed to the News Center)
- Africa Division, Somali Service: 1 (currently detailed to the News Center)
- China Division, Mandarin Service: 3
- East Asia and Pacific Division: 1
- East Asia and Pacific Division, China Branch, Mandarin Service: 1
- Persian News Network: 6
- Persian News Network, Central News and Production Unit: 21
- South and Central Asia Division: 2
- South and Central Asia Division, Afghanistan Branch: 1
- South and Central Asia Division, Afghanistan Branch, Dari Service: 4
- South and Central Asia Division, Afghanistan Branch, Pashto Service: 2
- South and Central Asia Division, Kurdish Service: 1 (currently detailed to the Persian News Network)

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

2. *For the June 20 CN: A detailed breakout of the \$17.433M being proposed for reprogramming.*

Answer: As of this writing, the dollar value that is being reprogrammed from the non-federal grantee organizations to USAGM in total is \$17,413,000. Also as of this writing, this adjusted amount will continue to be used for Mission Support as indicated in the CN your Committee received on June 20, 2025. Mission Support funds will be used for mission-oriented purposes on an as-needed basis.

3. *Finally, please provide an accounting of costs associated with buyouts and RIFs, the number of people for each, which program line is proposed to cover such costs, and when those notifications are anticipated to be submitted?*

Answer: USAGM's operational expenses for full-time employees who are departing employment via one of the voluntary departure programs or via involuntary reductions in force (RIF) are covered by existing administrative funding. The approximate payout costs for departing full-time employees are as follows. USAGM will provide a more detailed breakout of payout costs once final numbers are available.

- Annual Leave Payouts: \$15.5 million
- Buyouts (VERA/VSIP): \$1.75 million

While USAGM is in the process of conducting a RIF, we do not have any cost estimates regarding that RIF at this time. We will provide RIF cost estimates in the future.

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

House Appropriations - Minority

1. *What was the process from March (assuming submission of statutory minimum requirements to OMB) and June 3rd? What feedback was provided from OMB and why did it take 2 and a half months to start a conversation with Congress?*

Answer: USAGM respects the constitutional role played by Congress and fully intends to engage with Congress as appropriate.

2. *What is the status of the IBAB and plan for going forward? Is that considered part of the statutory minimum?*

Answer: The President dismissed all IBAB members. USAGM has no additional information regarding future potential staffing of the IBAB.

3. *Please provide a breakdown by job/function of the 11 required VOA personnel. The statutory minimum states that the VOA functional requirement and scope is duplicative with the activities of private broadcasters. Please this analysis and what private broadcasters is this referring to?*

Answer: Below is an update of USAGM's approximate level of full-time employees by component as of August 13, 2025, which includes the Voice of America functions.

- Broadcast Operations, Central Production Services, Traffic Branch/Traffic Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Central Production Services, Traffic Branch/Television Operations Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Central Production Services, Product Support Branch, Video Editors Services: 1
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division: 1
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division, Radio Multimedia: 5
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division, Television Operations/Master Control Services: 4
- Broadcast Operations, Operations Support Division, Television Operations/Studio Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Technical Support Division: 1
- Broadcast Operations, Technical Support Division, Television Maintenance Services: 2
- Broadcast Operations, Digital Management Division: 3
- Broadcast Operations, Digital Media Support: 4
- FM Programming: 1
- VOA News Center: 1
- VOA News Center, Coverage Desk: 1
- VOA News Center, Real Time News Desk: 3
- Africa Division: 4 (currently detailed to the News Center)
- Africa Division, Somali Service: 1 (currently detailed to the News Center)

**Follow-Up Information for House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff
August 30, 2025**

- China Division, Mandarin Service: 3
- East Asia and Pacific Division: 1
- East Asia and Pacific Division, China Branch, Mandarin Service: 1
- Persian News Network: 6
- Persian News Network, Central News and Production Unit: 21
- South and Central Asia Division: 2
- South and Central Asia Division, Afghanistan Branch: 1
- South and Central Asia Division, Afghanistan Branch, Dari Service: 4
- South and Central Asia Division, Afghanistan Branch, Pashto Service: 2
- South and Central Asia Division, Kurdish Service: 1 (currently detailed to the Persian News Network)

4. *For the \$17.43 million proposed to be reprogrammed, what activities are not covered by the \$225.6 million planned for Mission Support in FY25?*

Answer: As of this writing, the total dollar value that is being reprogrammed from the non-federal grantee organizations to USAGM is \$17,413,000. Also as of this writing, this adjusted amount will continue to be used for Mission Support as indicated in the CN your Committee received on June 20, 2025. Mission Support funds will be used for mission-oriented purposes on an as-needed basis.

APPENDIX E: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE REPORT – FEBRUARY 2025



Audience and Impact

OVERVIEW FOR 2025

Updated February 2025

BY THE NUMBERS

ANNUAL BUDGET FY 2024
\$866.9 million

LANGUAGES
63

MEASURED AUDIENCE
427 million*

4,886

television, radio, and digital
affiliates across the globe

738

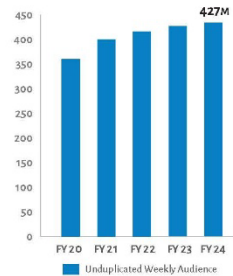
radio and TV affiliate
networks that serve multiple
cities or markets

AUDIENCE GROWTH

USACM measured
audience grew
21%
over the past four years,
now totaling

**427
MILLION***
unduplicated users
across all media

USACM MEASURED WEEKLY AUDIENCE
(IN MILLIONS) 2020-2024



MEASURED WEEKLY AUDIENCE
PERCENT GROWTH 2020-2024

VOA
361M **↑30%**

RFE/RL
47.4M **↑16%**

RFA* **Unreportable**

MBN
33.5M **↑22%**

OCB
3.2M **↑220%**

* **Notes on Audience Reporting:** FY 2024 reporting for USACM's global audience does not include data for China due to government restrictions limiting USACM's ability to conduct comprehensive surveys of VOA and RFA programming in Mandarin and Cantonese since FY 2018. Additionally, USACM is not able to measure RFA audiences in North Korea, Xinjiang (Uyghur service), and Tibet. As audience data is only available for four of RFA's nine language services the network's global audience is considered Unreportable, though any available RFA country data is included in USACM global audience estimates.

AUDIENCE BY REGION

Latin America — 101.2 million

Data from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Current audience data unavailable for Haiti. Reflects audiences for VOA and OCB.

Middle East and North Africa — 34.3 million

Data from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen. Current audience data unavailable for Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, and Syria. Reflects primary audiences for MBN and VOA.

Other Diaspora audiences — 2.4 million

Data for Russian and Mandarin programming audiences in Australia, Canada, and Germany. Reflects audiences for RFA, RFE/RL, and VOA.

Sub-Saharan Africa — 93.6 million

Data from Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Current audience data unavailable for Burundi, Central African Republic, Eritrea, and South Sudan. Reflects primary audiences for VOA.

Near East, South and Central Asia, West Asia, Eurasia — 102.8 million

Data from Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Crimea, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Reflects primary audiences for RFE/RL and VOA.

East and Southeast Asia — 92.5 million

Data from Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Current audience data unavailable for China and North Korea. Reflects primary audiences for RFA and VOA.

DIGITAL AUDIENCES

Web traffic grew in FY 2024 after declines in FY 2023, to 36.5 million average weekly visits across networks, a

22%

increase over the past four years

334 MILLION

average weekly digital video views measured across websites and social media platforms of all networks/services in FY 2024

TOP TEN AUDIENCES FOR U.S. INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

WEEKLY UNDUPLICATED AUDIENCE
Adults who listen/view/use programming at least once a week, based on FY 2020-2024 survey data

In millions	
Indonesia	64.8
Nigeria	37.4
Mexico	37.1
India	29.1
Iran	12.2
Peru	11.9
Russia	10.1
Ukraine	9.8
Iraq	9.3
Egypt	9.0

As percentage of adult population represented by the survey

Afghanistan	66%
Somalia	62%
Nicaragua	59%
Costa Rica	54%
Dominican Republic	50%
El Salvador	49%
Peru	49%
Bolivia	47%
Niger	46%
Armenia	45%

CIRCUMVENTION

USAGM's Open Technology Fund (OTF) provides a range of tools to help audiences overcome internet restrictions. In FY 2024, these tools continued to serve these populations.

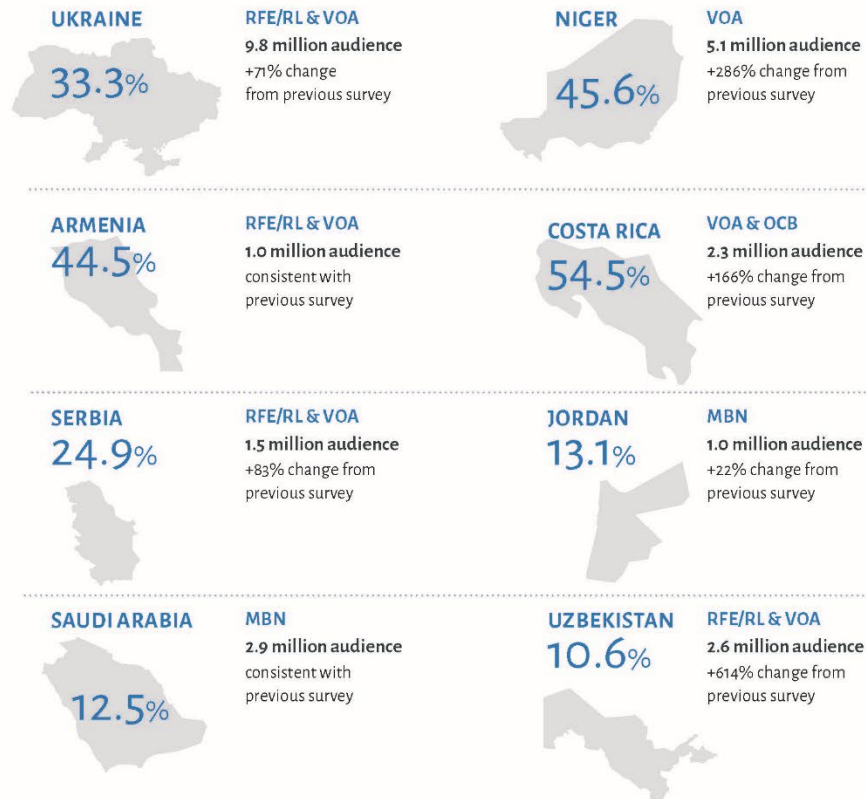
46 million

monthly active users of USAGM proxy tools

20%

increase in weekly unique visits to USAGM sites via proxy tools
17,700,000 in FY 2024

SELECT NEW AUDIENCE REACH FINDINGS



For individual countries, the measured weekly audience is expressed as a percentage of the adult population covered by the survey. USAGM measures and reports unduplicated audience, the number of individuals age 15+ who access content, counting a person only once, regardless of how many platforms or networks they use over the course of a week.

IMPACT MEASURES*

PROGRAM CREDIBILITY

Percentage of weekly audience who consider information to be very or somewhat trustworthy

	FY 2024 ACTUAL		FY 2024 ACTUAL
VOA	86	VOA	76
RFE/RL	82	RFE/RL	65
RFA	98	RFA	80
MBN	83	MBN	69
OCB	NA	OCB	NA

HELPS FORM OPINIONS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES

Percentage of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have helped them form opinions on important issues somewhat or a great deal

*Note: Impact measures based on availability of sufficient survey data from target markets.

ABOUT USAGM

The U.S. Agency for Global Media is an independent federal agency, supervising all U.S. government-supported, civilian international broadcasting, whose mission is to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.

USAGM networks have a measured audience of 427 million people in more than 100 countries. USAGM networks and entities include the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (Alhurra Television), the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio Televisión Martí), and the Open Technology Fund (OTF).



APPENDIX F: U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA RESPONSE



330 Independence Avenue SW | Washington, DC 20237 | usagm.gov

TO: Gayle Voshell, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Audits

FROM: Michael Rigas, Acting Chief Executive Officer, U.S. Agency for Global Media

SUBJECT: Management Response to OIG Draft Report — *Evaluation of the U.S. Agency for Global Media's Approach To Reducing Operations*

The U.S. Agency for Global Media thanks the U.S. Department of State Office of Inspector General for the opportunity to respond to the draft report, and, as detailed below, concurs with each of the six recommendations. Many of the recommendations are actions that the Agency has begun to implement over the past six months.

USAGM's reduction in operations was undertaken in direct response to Executive Order 14238, which directed USAGM to eliminate its non-statutory components and functions to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law and to reduce the performance of its statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law. Compliance with an Executive Order is required in the Executive Branch. USAGM has already taken, on its own initiative, a number of steps the report recommends.

USAGM is grateful for OIG's partnership in ensuring the effective execution of USAGM's mission.

USAGM provides the following responses to the recommendations in the draft report:

Recommendation 1: *OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) develop and implement a comprehensive plan to determine its statutory minimum requirements to implement Executive Order 14238. This effort should consider laws and regulations specific to USAGM, as well as laws and regulations that apply to all federal agencies. Furthermore, when determining the languages in which to broadcast, USAGM should actively seek input from key stakeholders, including Congress, to ensure that considerations of national security and diplomacy are integrated into decision making.*

Management Response: **Concur. Implementation already undertaken.** USAGM will develop and implement a comprehensive plan to identify the Agency's statutory minimum requirements



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under E.O. 14238. The Agency has already assessed its obligations under the International Broadcasting Act and the relevant appropriations acts and will continue to assess government-wide legal and regulatory requirements applicable to all federal agencies. In determining language-service priorities, USAGM is committed to conducting the legally required consultations with the Department of State and the required notifications to Congress. Over the past six months, USAGM has been in regular communication with our committees of jurisdiction and the relevant officials at the Department of State.

Recommendation 2: *Following the implementation of Recommendation 1, OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) formally define its agency priority goals to focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results. The defined goals should be measurable, with specific targets, and should clearly connect with USAGM's core mission.*

Management Response: Concur. USAGM will formally define its goals to focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results.

Recommendation 3: *Following the implementation of Recommendation 2, OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media develop a strategic plan in compliance with the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024, that reflects the agency's shift in goals since the issuance of Executive Order 14238. At a minimum, the strategic plan should include actions planned to achieve the goals and key performance indicators.*

Management Response: Concur. Implementation already undertaken. USAGM has already developed an internal draft strategic plan and will continue to develop and update it consistent with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024 to reflect the Agency's current goals and objectives.

Recommendation 4: *OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media perform a comprehensive strategic workforce planning effort to align staffing resources, including personal services contractors, to agency-defined goals (Recommendation 2) and strategic plans (Recommendation 3). At a minimum, the strategic workforce planning effort should ensure the continuity of critical functions (both internal support functions and broadcasting-related) and identify strategies to effectively address skill gaps identified during the planning effort.*

Management Response: Concur. Implementation already undertaken. USAGM will conduct a comprehensive strategic workforce planning effort to align its staffing resources with the Agency's defined goals. The effort will prioritize the continuity of critical internal support and



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broadcasting functions and will identify strategies to address any skill gaps. USAGM notes that it is already working closely with managers to recall personnel from administrative leave and is also currently hiring under an OPM-approved hiring plan developed in close coordination with department heads.

Recommendation 5: *OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media establish a dedicated implementation team responsible for coordinating, executing, and monitoring agency reform efforts.*

Management Response: Concur. Implementation already undertaken. As noted above, USAGM is already working to engage stakeholders, assess workforce needs, and plan for the future. USAGM management will continue to coordinate, execute, and monitor agency efforts.

Recommendation 6: *OIG recommends that the U.S. Agency for Global Media develop a communication strategy to effectively convey its updated mission, goals, objectives, and the rationale behind its broadcasting decisions to internal and external stakeholders.*

Management Response: Concur. Implementation already undertaken. USAGM has consistently worked to improve its communications over the past six months. As noted above, USAGM is in weekly contact with the Department of State, congressional staff, internal management, and our grantee networks. USAGM will continue to assess how to better communicate its objectives.

USAGM appreciates the opportunity to respond to the draft report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rigas".

Michael Rigas
Acting Chief Executive Officer

ABBREVIATIONS

E.O.	Executive Order
GAO	Government Accountability Office
MBN	Middle-East Broadcasting Networks
OCB	Office of Cuba Broadcasting
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PSC	personal services contractors
RFA	Radio Free Asia
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
RIF	reduction in force
U.S.C.	United States Code
USAGM	U.S. Agency for Global Media
VOA	Voice of America



HELP FIGHT FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

[Stateoig.gov/HOTLINE](https://stateoig.gov/HOTLINE)

If you fear reprisal, contact the
OIG Whistleblower Coordinator to learn more about your rights.
WPEAOmbuds@stateoig.gov