

The Real World Broadcasting Project 2005-7

DFID funding application

Name and address of applicant:

Mark Galloway, Director,
International Broadcasting Trust,
3-7 Euston Centre, Regent's Place, London NW1 3JG
Tel 020 7874 [REDACTED] Fax 020 7874 [REDACTED]
email [REDACTED] website www.ibt.org.uk

Timescale:

March 1 2005 – February 28 2007

Sources of funding:

The total budget is £134,805. We have already secured contributions totaling £19,500. We are applying to DFID for the balance of £115,305. (£65,305 in 2005-6 and £60,000 in 2006-7). Contributions so far have come from: the BG Group, WWF, BBC, Oxfam, Christian Aid, Save the Children and PLAN UK.

Principal aims and objectives:

To build support and capacity within the UK broadcast media for a significant improvement in coverage of the developing world. The aim of the project is to have a direct impact on the quality, range and ambition of international programmes commissioned by the main public service broadcasters. The research study, included within the project, will quantify this and provide an accurate and impartial record of non-news factual programming on British television. It will also seek to make more transparent the commissioning process and the way in which broadcasters decide which programmes to commission. In addition, the study will, for the first time, seek to measure the impact of a range of international programmes on different audiences so that developing world experts can be better informed about the sorts of programmes that provide the best means of raising awareness amongst different audiences of development issues and the Millennium Development Goals.

Project origins:

In 2004, IBT embarked on a joint project with the BBC and the Cambridge Media and Environment Programme. We organized two major seminars where broadcasters and developing world experts could meet and debate. The seminars were a great success and have already resulted in new international commissions by the BBC. It is now proposed that we build on this success, with a more ambitious programme of seminars and research, again in conjunction with the BBC – and with the support of the CMEP. We also plan to include other UK broadcasters in the seminars. One of the distinguishing features of this project is that we are working collaboratively with broadcasters.

The project in brief

There are two main elements to the project:

1. Seminars - building on the success of two major brainstorms organized by IBT (with the Cambridge Media and Environment Programme) in 2004, we propose a series of further seminars where tv executives and commissioners from the principal UK broadcasters are able to take part in a constructive dialogue with developing world experts.
2. New research - we shall turn our biennial tv monitoring project *The World on the Box* into a continuous, ongoing project and, for the first time, include new research into the commissioning process and attempt to measure the audience impact of different types of international programmes.

These two elements, combined with high level dialogue with UK broadcasters, have the explicit aim of encouraging the public service broadcasters to think more strategically about their coverage of the developing world.

About IBT

The International Broadcasting Trust (IBT) is an educational and media charity working to promote television coverage of the developing world. Our aim is to further awareness and understanding of the lives of the majority of the world's people - and the issues which affect them.

IBT was set up in 1982 by a consortium of over fifty aid and development agencies, educational bodies, churches and trades unions, as a unique partnership between non-governmental organisations and broadcasters, educationalists and film-makers.

IBT is also an independent television production company which has made more than 200 programmes for Channel 4, BBC and ITV, across a range of genres including documentary, drama and schools. IBT no longer makes programmes in house. It now develops tv projects in collaboration with other independent producers and broadcasters.

IBT's sister organisation, the Third World and Environment Broadcasting Project (3WE), lobbies broadcasters, regulators and government, to promote better television coverage of the developing world and the environment. 3WE also conducts broadcasting research, producing a biennial monitoring report.

Aims and Objectives of IBT

IBT's vision is that British television should produce a range of imaginative, inspiring and innovative high quality programmes - across a range of genres - which enable a mass audience to learn about and engage with the developing world, its people and the issues which affect their lives.

IBT works in four strategic areas to deliver its mission.

1. Establish and maintain **high-level dialogue** on programme policy with the providers of the five main public service TV channels.
2. Develop and promote to the main public service channels (and appropriate digital channels) innovative, wide ranging **programme ideas** on international issues.
3. Conduct TV monitoring **research** to include news and non-news factual international programming.
4. **Lobby** government, regulators and broadcasters to provide high quality and imaginative international programming.

IBT's achievements in 2004

2004 has been an important year for IBT. We have:

1. Co-produced two major television series, *Consumer Power* and *World of Difference* (both broadcast on Channel 4 in the spring of 2004).
2. Worked with the BBC to improve its coverage of the developing world and organised two seminars attended by more than 40 senior BBC executives and experts from the developing world.
3. Monitored the approach of the new regulator, Ofcom, to public service television including having input to its strategic review at each key stage.
4. Contributed to every consultation process on the renewal of the BBC Charter and launched a successful Early Day Motion, in Parliament, on the BBC's international role.
5. Produced *The World on the Box*, the seventh in a series of tv monitoring reports, looking in detail at international factual programming on British television. For the first time, the study also included news.

2004 has also been a year in which we have built on the success of our earlier campaign in which we lobbied the Government, Parliament, civil servants, regulators and broadcasters and secured a crucial amendment to the Communications Act, which included an obligation on public service broadcasters to provide non news programming on 'matters of international significance or interest.'
The campaign also resulted in a statutory duty on Ofcom to promote the interests of citizens.

Background to the Real World Broadcasting Project

The project arises out of two brainstorms organised jointly by IBT and the Cambridge Media and Environment Programme in 2004. The seminars were held in Kew (in May 2004) and Cambridge (in September 2005).

The one day Kew seminar was attended by around 20 senior BBC executives (including

██████████ and 20 developing world experts, including academics, writers, film makers, business executives, grassroots activists, NGO staff.



The brainstorm included participants who travelled from Haiti and Mexico to attend. There was significant support from UK based NGOs - [REDACTED] attended. There was also support from DFID - the seminar was addressed by the Secretary of State, Hilary Benn.

The two day Cambridge brainstorm was attended by a similar group, including - from the BBC - [REDACTED] and - on the non BBC side - film makers who traveled from South Africa and Pakistan, [REDACTED]

The seminars sought to analyse the record of British television and its coverage of the developing world. There was an opportunity to present the findings from a recent research report, *The World on the Box*, commissioned by IBT and published in June 2004. There was a genuine dialogue between both sides, with a number of BBC staff acknowledging criticisms and suggesting possible solutions. As part of the second seminar, there was a half day brainstorm, in which all the participants worked together on specific programme ideas - several of these are now being developed by the BBC.

After the seminars, the organisers received positive feedback from many of the participants and there was a widespread desire to see the exercise repeated and developed further. [REDACTED] said 'we've got to keep the debate going' and [REDACTED] said the role of the seminars was to help the BBC to establish 'a more strategic vision of developing world coverage across channels, and genres.' [REDACTED] will host a follow up lunch to discuss the progress on the programme ideas which were put forward.

At a recent meeting with the [REDACTED] there was recognition that the seminars had clearly influenced editorial staff and resulted in several new commissions - for example a major drama on China, and a fly on the wall series in a Ugandan hospital for the BBC's forthcoming season on Africa. [REDACTED] said he would like to attend one of the seminars in 2005.

It was also made clear that the BBC welcomed input from developing world experts with opinions on what its programming priorities in this area should be for the future.

At a meeting with Channel 4 executives, there was also recognition of the benefits of dialogue. They welcomed opportunities for further discussions about how their international coverage could be improved.

It is clear from the seminars that there is significant potential benefit from finding opportunities for further dialogue with the BBC, both at executive and producer level, and for engaging in similar dialogue with the other principal UK broadcasters (Channel 4, Five, Sky, ITV, ITN and Discovery) and for including independent producers in these discussions.

It is not within IBT's present capacity to undertake The Real World Broadcasting Project without additional funding.

Lessons learnt from the BBC seminars

There are a number of lessons which we have learnt from the seminars:

1. Broadcasters need to be challenged and encouraged to think more strategically about their coverage of the developing world.
2. There are institutional obstacles to improving coverage, partly as a result of the way in which broadcasters are organized, which need to be addressed and overcome – for example, the role of schedulers, the desire to maximize ratings, the division between domestic and international programmes.
3. Individual television executives have very few opportunities for dialogue with those outside the world of broadcasting.
4. Broadcasters acknowledge that they are getting it wrong in two key areas: promoting narrow and negative views of the developing world, and failing to reflect the real lives of many of their viewers who have close links with the developing world.
5. To survive and flourish, broadcasters need to think 'outside the box' and are genuinely willing to explore new and innovative ways of covering the developing world.
6. Developing world experts and representatives of UK based NGOs can benefit from a greater understanding of the constraints under which television commissioners operate and more regular contact with individual producers and executives.
7. Producers of some genres – notably current affairs and drama - are already challenging themselves to think more creatively about their coverage of issues which affect the developing world, with Channels 4's *Sex Traffic* and BBC1's *Doing Good*. Producers of other genres – documentaries, features, history, science and business – are failing to do so.

What has been achieved by the 2004 seminars?

The seminars have enabled us to establish a regular dialogue with the BBC. They have given a significant group of senior television executives greater insight into the issues which affect the developing world and the lives of the majority of the world's population. They have established links between developing world experts and tv executives. Both groups understand each other better, thus making future dialogue easier and more effective.

The seminars have placed – and kept – the issue of international coverage high on the agenda of BBC executives. They have acted as a catalyst, encouraging broadcasters to think more strategically about how they report international events and how they could go deeper, to include more context and the issues which affect people's lives.

The seminars have also encouraged BBC executives to be more ambitious about their coverage and to move it into new areas.

As a result of taking part in the seminars, the executives and the BBC in general, have recognized the value of dialogue with outside agencies and experts. The seminars have helped to cement a partnership between IBT and the BBC which is already bearing fruit in the planning of the BBC's Africa season. The BBC has organized an event for stakeholders to find out more about the season and to give their input.

It was also clear from our recent meeting with [REDACTED] that the seminars have had a considerable impact within the BBC. We know of several new programmes which have been developed or commissioned as a result of conversations which took place in Kew or Cambridge. For example, there is a new drama set in contemporary China, and a fly-on-the-wall series set in a Ugandan school. It was also clear from discussions at the seminars that the BBC participants recognised that television was failing to reflect the many connections between the lives of their British viewers – particularly those from ethnic minorities – and the rest of the world.

What is the evidence that broadcasters are keen to participate in future seminars?

As a result of our meeting with [REDACTED] in December 2004, we have a firm commitment from the BBC to take part in seminars in 2005 and 2006 and to give all the support they can to this project. The seminars have high level sponsorship from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The BBC have appointed [REDACTED] to liaise with us and he is an active member of the steering committee.

We have had informal discussions with Channel 4 executives and producers and have received support for the seminars. We hope to receive a formal commitment from [REDACTED] when we meet him in the spring. In the meantime, we have been able to meet with, and establish good relations with [REDACTED]

In 2004, we were inundated with requests to attend from independent producers and freelancers- and we were only able to accommodate a handful from this sector. The BBC's commitment to the project has created great interest in the seminars in the wider broadcasting community.

Principal aims and objectives of the Real World Broadcasting Project

The seminars

The principal aim of the seminars is to build support and capacity within the UK broadcast media for a significant improvement in coverage of the developing world. The seminars should have a direct impact on the quality, range and ambition of international programmes commissioned by the main public service broadcasters.

The research study

The principal aim of the research project is to provide a detailed and accurate record of non-news factual programming by the principal public service broadcasters.

The study will also undertake research which will pioneer new criteria for measuring the impact of a range of international programmes on a cross section of viewers, so that broadcasters and developing world experts can have a better understanding of the sorts of programmes which are best able to promote awareness and understanding of the developing world and of the Millennium Development Goals.

There will also be research into the commissioning process, based on a series of detailed interviews with a range of UK commissioners. The aim will be to promote greater transparency so that there is a clearer understanding of the criteria used by commissioners when deciding which international programmes to commission. Once these criteria are more clearly and widely understood, there will be room for debate and discussion.

Further aims and objectives of the seminars

1. To continue to develop a constructive, strategic and practical dialogue with the BBC at all levels.
2. To produce more seminars so that developing world experts can have regular contact with television producers and executives.
3. To ensure that the seminars result in new programmes being commissioned and a real improvement in the range, quality, depth and ambition of tv coverage of the developing world.
4. To engage other broadcasters – Channel 4, ITV, ITN, Five, Sky, Discovery – in a similar dialogue.
5. To explore other ways and opportunities to encourage broadcasters to think more strategically about their coverage of the developing world.

Further aims and objectives of the research study

1. To monitor the record of broadcasters and measure any improvement by producing new research on television coverage of the developing world, by turning our biennial monitoring project *The World on the Box* into an ongoing project which can produce 'snapshots' of tv coverage at appropriate opportunities and publish a full report in June 2006.
2. To produce new research into the commissioning process which offers an analysis of obstacles and opportunities for improving developing world coverage.
3. To attempt to measure the impact of different types of international programming on audiences.

The project in more detail

The seminars

It is proposed that there will be two seminars in 2005.

The first will take place in June 2005 and will focus principally on writers of drama, soaps and comedy. This is a key area for growth. Drama and comedy are genres in which the broadcasters are beginning to see that there is significant potential for raising international issues. Channel 4 has led the way with its single drama *Sex Traffic*. The BBC is following with its drama series *Doing Good* in which the principal characters will be aid workers and peacekeepers. *The Vicar of Dibley* has been the first comedy drama to feature a storyline about poverty in the developing world. Some of BBC1's primetime series like *Casualty* and *Eastenders* may feature African storylines for the BBC's forthcoming Africa season.

Participants will include a range of developing world experts, several of whom will travel specially to the UK to take part. From television, there will be scriptwriters and producers from the main soaps on the BBC and also a number of freelancers who work both for the BBC and Channel 4. Senior BBC executives have agreed to attend.

The second seminar will take place in November 2005. It will focus on the BBC and examine its recent track record in terms of its international coverage, including the Africa season. The seminar will also debate the challenges and goals which the BBC should set itself for the next five years. In particular, the BBC is keen to know from a range of experts what they consider to be the issues, stories, themes and geographical regions which could merit a season like the Africa season, aimed at introducing a mainstream audience to the developing world and the Millennium Development Goals.

It is proposed that this should be an event for alumni, principally aimed at developing greater awareness amongst the 120 people who have attended previous seminars.

There will also be some participants who are attending for the first time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has agreed to take part in this event.

It is proposed that there will be two further seminars in 2006. Precise details will be decided nearer the time by the steering committee, depending on the achievements of the first two seminars. Ideally, one of these seminars should focus principally on Channel 4, with a Channel 4 representative joining the steering committee to help to plan this event.

We shall be meeting with [REDACTED] to discuss this in more detail, in spring 2005.

Strategic thinking behind the seminars

The seminars are based on the concept of *constructive dialogue* with broadcasters. In the past, IBT adopted a strategy of seeking annual meetings with senior broadcasters. These meetings provided a useful opportunity to place international issues on the agenda and to argue for improved coverage. It was particularly helpful to approach these meetings armed with the latest findings of the research project, for example *The World on the Box*.

But the meetings had limited value, as the broadcasters faced a list of competing demands. There were a number of challenges: to place international issues higher on the agenda of broadcasters, to encourage broadcasters to think more strategically about their international coverage and to have impact on the thinking not just of senior executives but also of commissioners and producers and directors. In short, to achieve a significant cultural change amongst broadcasters and the wider broadcast community.

The seminars provide the means for this. They enable us to keep asking broadcasters to spell out their strategic thinking and to allow this thinking to be scrutinized. They also provide an opportunity for tv executives, commissioners, producers, directors, writers and reporters to learn more about the developing world, its people and the issues which affect their lives.

The broadcasters have the opportunity to meet – and get to know – people who have traveled from the developing world to fake part. They can hear first hand testimony and become genuinely interested, perhaps even passionate, about the stories. Once they become interested, they are more likely to commission on these subjects.

The broadcasters, by spending two days with a range of developing world experts, get to know them as people and learn about their lives and their view of the world. This can be a life-changing experience and certainly provides contacts for the future.

Since many of the developing world experts come from British NGOs, the seminars are also a useful means for them to understand how broadcasters think and to learn more about the commissioning process. As a result, they are better able to pitch ideas – both directly and indirectly – to broadcasters. Many developing world experts rely on broadcasters coming to them for stories and ideas. As a result of the seminars, NGOs and others can be more proactive and seek to influence the agenda of broadcasters.

The seminars work both with a wide range of participants and also, with a narrower focus. We would like to keep the mix so that some seminars have programme makers from a range of genres, and others are able to be more genre specific. So, for example, our first seminar will be aimed specifically at writers and producers working in drama, soaps and comedy. Many of the programmes they work on are UK-based. We would like to encourage some of these strands – like *Eastenders* – to include international storylines, which can also reflect the connections which many British viewers have with other parts of the world.

The research study

There are three elements to the research study:

1. Detailed monitoring of broadcast programmes.
2. Research into the commissioning process.
3. Research into audience impact.

All three elements will be undertaken by the University of Westminster working closely with the Project's own Broadcasting Officer.

Monitoring

When the Project begins, in March 2005, the University's researcher will review the methodology and make any necessary changes, install software and design a database so that programmes can be logged on a weekly basis. This will enable 'snapshots' to be taken at any appropriate moment and the results of these snapshots shared with colleagues and the media. The full findings of the monitoring project will be published in June 2006. There will then follow a period for dissemination and advocacy. For further details about the methodology see *The World on the Box* page 5.

Commissioning

It is proposed that the Broadcasting Officer undertakes a series of detailed interviews with commissioners, schedulers and Directors of Programmes from a range of broadcasters. The list of interviewees, and the questions to be asked will be agreed with the project steering committee. For some of the interviews, the Broadcasting Officer will be accompanied by a member of the steering committee, if this is deemed appropriate. The aim of these interviews will be to achieve a clearer understanding of the criteria which broadcasters and commissioners use when deciding which programmes to commission.

It will also provide for a greater awareness of the obstacles which exist and will encourage broadcasters to think more strategically about international programming and how they measure their expectations and determine the success or failure of individual programmes.

Impact

The Broadcasting Officer, in conjunction with the University of Westminster team and the project steering committee, will organize a series of focus groups. A range of different programmes will be shown to selected audiences and the research team will evaluate the impact of these programmes. To measure impact, we shall focus on a range of elements, including the following: comprehensibility, empathy, emotional engagement, educational content, greater understanding of the issues, memorability and appreciation.

We shall also make reference to other attempts by broadcasters to measure impact – for example PBS, the US public service broadcaster, has an index called Points of Impact Beyond Broadcast and the BBC will soon have its own criteria to measure 'public value'. A greater understanding of the impact of different programmes will enable developing world experts to lobby broadcasters more effectively and will help broadcasters themselves to be more effective in achieving audience awareness about the developing world and the Millennium Development Goals.

The role of the Broadcasting Officer

The Broadcasting Officers will work across both elements of the project, the seminars and the research study. His/her responsibilities will include:

1. Being the main point of contact for the seminars and the research project. S/he will field all inquiries, liaise with partners and sponsors, organize meetings of the steering committees, take and distribute minutes at the meetings.
2. Drawing up a list of possible participants for the seminars by liaising with broadcasters, NGOs, DFID, educational institutions and talking to individual film makers, experts, writers, business executives etc
3. Booking participants for the seminars and liaising with speakers.
4. Looking at possible venues, liaising with venue managers, booking a venue, agreeing rates, rooms to be used, menus, organizing transport for participants, delegates' expenses, etc
5. Attending the seminars and helping the steering committee on the day with any organizational matters.
6. Drawing up a list of interviewees for the research project, agreeing a list of questions, contacting interviewees, arranging appointments, conducting one to one interviews, transcribing the interviews, doing the first draft of this section of the report in close collaboration with the University of Westminster research team.
7. Organising a range of focus groups, tapes for the groups to watch, recruitment of facilitators, attending and recording group meetings, transcribing these recordings, working with the University of Westminster team to draw up the conclusions of the impact study.

Project evaluation and monitoring

The seminars

The seminars will be managed and monitored by a steering committee comprising:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. After each seminar, the steering committee will undertake an evaluation and will seek detailed feedback from a range of participants. At the end of the two year project, a full evaluation will be undertaken by the steering committee and independent evaluators will be appointed and asked for their own findings. The results of these evaluations will be made available to all funders and other interested parties. The evaluation will assess the impact of the seminars on participants and on their work. It will also document specific programmes which have been commissioned as a result of the seminars, and any changes in broadcasters' international strategies which may have resulted from the seminars.

There will also be at least one peer reviewed academic journal article written by [REDACTED] in – for example – The Journal of International Development. DFID will be invited to nominate a member of the steering committee, if this is deemed appropriate.

The research study

The research project will be managed and monitored by a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Independent evaluators will be appointed at the end of the research project and their conclusions will be made available to all funders and other interested parties. DFID will also be invited to nominate a member of the steering committee, again, if appropriate.

Sustainability of the research project

The research project is a unique longitudinal study which began in 1989. Research findings have been published biennially. The last report, published in June 2004, was the seventh in the series and was fully funded with a research grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. It was also, for the first time, commissioned from the University of Westminster. This research project has earned widespread praise and respect within the television industry and amongst developing world experts. Prior to 2004, it had been funded on an ad hoc basis, principally by the main development agencies like Oxfam and Christian Aid. But this funding was not adequate to commission the study from a third party. One of the aims of the present project is to talk to research agencies to secure new funding which will place the project on a more secure financial basis. It is also hoped that the new regulator, Ofcom, may provide future funding. The partnership with the University of Westminster should also help to access future research grants.

Beneficiaries of the research project

The research findings will be widely distributed. They will be available online via the IBT website. Hard copies will be printed and posted to MPs, peers, journalists, broadcasters, independent producers, development agencies, research agencies, regulators, libraries and academics. When the findings are published there is likely to be extensive press and radio coverage (as there was in 2004). The report will also be used to request meetings with senior industry figures, as part of our continuing lobbying and campaigning work.

It is likely that the report will be quoted from extensively in the future. It is a unique, longitudinal study which is widely respected in both academic and media circles. No one else is conducting this sort of research.

In the past, it has been quoted in the House of Commons, the House of Lords, in speeches made by broadcasters and regulators, and in documents published by Channel 4 and others. It has also been mentioned frequently at industry meetings and seminars. The report's author is likely to be asked to present the findings both to development agencies and to broadcasters.

The report will also be available to members of the public.

It is likely that, since the research will also look at the commissioning process and the impact of programmes, both for the first time, it will be even more widely read than its predecessors.

It is also hoped that the research findings will have a strategic effect. If broadcasters have not improved their record of international programming, there will be considerable pressure for them to reverse this decline and the report will be a powerful lobbying tool. It will also place broadcasters in the spotlight and encourage greater transparency and accountability.

It is hoped that the new research – into the commissioning process and the impact of international programmes on different audiences – will lead to greater care and scrutiny in terms of which international programmes and which genres of programmes, broadcasters decide to prioritise. This will place a lot of new information in the public domain, which will be helpful to developing world experts, academics, members of the public and campaigners. It will also be of considerable use to DFID with its goals of using television to promote development awareness and the Millennium Development Goals.

Appendix 1

The Real World Broadcasting Project 2005-6

Budget

1. Capacity building

Broadcasting officer- two year appointment – full time post- will organize seminars and conduct interviews with tv executives and commissioners. [REDACTED]

Project consultant: [REDACTED]

Seminars – room hire, accommodation, catering, travel expenses for participants

Staff expenses: travel, telephone, entertaining, research materials

IBT and CMEP overheads [REDACTED]

Sub-total:

£89,532

2. Broadcast monitoring –research – University of Westminster

Research Fellow [REDACTED]

Research Director [REDACTED]

University of Westminster overheads @ [REDACTED]

Sub-total:

£24,429

3. **Broadcast monitoring - dissemination and advocacy - 3WE**

Report design, typesetting, and print-proofing	£ 3,000
Report printing (1,700 copies at 32pp + 2-colour cover)	£ 2,000
Dissemination (mailing and media launch)	£ 1,800
Preparing submissions to regulators, government etc	£ 2,500
3WE overheads @ [REDACTED]	£ 744
Sub-total:	<u>£10,044</u>

4. **Project management - IBT**

Overall project management by IBT Director, Mark Galloway [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]
IBT overheads at [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]
Sub-total:	<u>£10,800</u>

Total: £134,805

