

Guidelines for Broadcast Regulation

IRIS 2006-5:1/1

*Mara Rossini
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam*

UNESCO and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) have frequently been requested to offer guidance where new regulatory organisations are set up. In answer to these requests, a handbook outlining regulatory guidelines has been jointly produced by the two international bodies. The main purpose of the handbook is to enlighten stakeholders on the means available to them to preserve and indeed strengthen public service broadcasting against the backdrop of a commercially viable industry.

The issues discussed in the handbook range from jurisdiction over cable and telecommunications as carriers of programmes to spectrum management and broadcasting-related intellectual property. The role of Government in the digital switchover is also considered as are the dilemmas concerning regulation that the private and the public sector are faced with. Indeed, regulation of broadcasting in the interest of protecting citizens must be balanced against the need to ensure that fundamental freedoms are not violated. Also, the regulator's independence must be safeguarded while allowing the pursuit of public policy objectives. Finally, an equilibrium must be found between the potentially conflicting rights of the broadcaster, society and the individual.

One of the topics dealt with in the handbook is the licensing of community radio stations, which is of particular interest to UNESCO, as it has always encouraged the allocation of frequencies for radio stations which serve the needs of marginalized groups.

Policymakers, regulators and broadcast media practitioners can rely on this book as a useful reference, and can, in particular, draw ideas from a substantial section outlining national experiences regarding model regulatory objects.

Guidelines for Broadcast Regulation

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/file_download.php/1c9ed59b01da3180e33cd1b35a5e3908Guidelines+for+Broadcasting+Regulation.pdf

