

Report: Systems and Revenue Sources of Public Service Broadcasters of the World

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(Summary)

The authors have compiled an internal report of the research on public service broadcasters' services, corporate governance, and funding in seven countries/region (France, Germany, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States), in the light of grasping the current circumstances and examining the institutional guarantee.

In each country/region, technological developments is facilitating the diversification of transmission channels, ranging from terrestrial to satellite, cable, and IP-based networks, and multichannel television services. Looking at the past five years, Internet distribution of videos with image quality equivalent to that of television broadcasting became available, and transportable, personal digital devices represented by iPad and smart phones are rapidly spreading; these two phenomena made the greatest impact on public service broadcasters during this period. In response to these changes of media environment, all public service broadcasters in each country/region have respectively introduced a new video-on-demand service that enable the users to view TV programs they have missed for seven days after the broadcasts. Furthermore, in Europe, where public service broadcasters hold an influential position in the domestic television market, such advanced digital services are institutionally and officially recognized as one of public service broadcasters' duties, but, at the same time, Germany and UK have introduced prior-examinations by regulatory organizations on whether a new service to be introduced will generate a public value.

Meanwhile, as the global economic downturn, regime changes, the emergence of diverse platforms for TV programs, and other different variables are impacting the broadcasting industry, debates over the license fee system—primary funding source for public service broadcasters—are taking place. Prior to other nations, Germany has reviewed its current license fee system and confirmed the license fees' nature as “social contribution,” and they have consequently decided to change the collection method from “charging depending on TV-set ownership” to “flat charging per household.” It is also observed that the size of financial resources for operating media organizations including public service broadcasters are shrinking in each country/region due to the economic slump and accompanying tight fiscal policies. In order to contribute to the healthy development of democracy, will public service broadcasters are able to continue fulfilling their missions, and if so, what types of funding methods will be feasible? A new challenge is facing them.