Report on the impact of the UNESCO Media Development Indicators assessments

July 2013

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to address the impact of the completed UNESCO Media Development Indicators (MDI) assessments, which have analyzed the media environments of Bhutan, Croatia, East Timor, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Jordan, the Maldives, Mozambique and Tunisia; and to evaluate the influence of the reports that are currently being implemented in more than a dozen other countries, namely: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Iraq, Liberia, Nepal, Palestine, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Uruguay. This paper also takes into account the cases of Benin, Qatar and the regional assessment involving Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, where other stakeholders have taken ownership of the tool to conduct partial or complete assessments of the media landscape.

UNESCO's MDIs are a unique analytical tool to evaluate media landscapes and determine the areas in which intervention is most needed. The indicators were created through a widespread consultation process involving experts, media practitioners, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and professional associations from all regions of the world; and are based on the theoretical framework of the Windhoek Declaration and the subsequent declarations on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Media adopted in Almaty, Santiago, Sana'a and Sophia. The MDIs were finalized and unanimously endorsed in 2008 by the Intergovernmental Council of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). Since then, they have become accepted as an internationally recognized and legitimated framework for assessing media development.

The MDI indicators are structured around five categories: legal and regulatory framework, plurality and diversity of media, media as a platform for democratic discourse, professional capacity building and infrastructural capacity. Most MDI-based assessments that have been carried out by UNESCO cover all these areas and thereby provide a complete picture of the state of media development in all its aspects. In some cases, however, rapid assessments or partial ones focusing on selected categories have been prioritized for practical reasons, for example in countries where there was an urgency for information in order to be able to contribute to the drafting of media laws. The findings in each category are followed by practical and comprehensive recommendations for change. Consequently, the MDI research exercise provides an overview of the conditions necessary for the media to effectively contribute to plural and democratic societies. The application of the indicators to a given country is typically done in a multi-stakeholder fashion, and the results are widely disseminated. With the support of UNESCO headquarters, MDIs are quality controlled to ensure the integrity of research findings and the alignment of recommendations with international standards.

Structure

This research paper is divided into two sections: the first analyzes the impact of the assessments and the second identifies efficient follow-up activities and offers recommendations in this area. This structure is designed to enable readers to get a general overview of the different types of effect of the MDI assessments, followed by information on how these results have been achieved or promoted. Learning from the experiences of past MDI assessments can be useful for cases where the implementation of the MDIs is being undertaken or considered.

The types of influence that the MDI assessments have had, as identified during the research phase of this paper, have been divided into four categories, which are presented in the first section of this paper. The first category refers to the impact of the MDI assessments in assisting the development of governmental policies and laws regarding the media sector and provides practical examples of policy and legal changes

that have occurred after the implementation of the MDIs, in line with the recommendations of the reports. This section also deals with the various cases where the MDIs are being used as an advocacy tool to promote legal reform.

The second category covers how these evaluations assisted in guiding media-related interventions in the numerous areas in which non-state actors, such as media organizations, journalists associations, civil society organizations (CSOs) or local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), play a key and active role in the shaping of the media sector.

The third category relates to how the MDI assessment process itself has contributed to promoting dialogue between the different stakeholders, including in highly polarized environments, and to the empowerment of the various actors involved, who have gained knowledge on internationally agreed standards in the media sector. The process is also assessed in terms of its benefit to building the research capacities of the academic institutions with which UNESCO partnered for the implementation of the assessments.

The last category of the first section describes the impact the assessments have had on UNESCO itself and on its activities in the area of Communication and Information, by explaining the effects of the reports in strengthening UNESCO's position as a neutral and credible actor in media development, in facilitating strategic planning and programming of media-related projects such as via the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), and in promoting partnerships and synergies with other organizations working in the country.

The second section of this study focuses on follow-up activities that can help maximize the impact of the MDI assessments. It explains the wide range of activities promoted in countries following the implementation of the MDIs, and their positive potential effects. Various projects and events can help raise awareness and create opportunities for discussion and collaborative work among the different stakeholders. These can be particularly beneficial in encouraging the government to work on the implementation of the recommendations, identifying possible partnerships and convincing donors of the need to finance media development.

Finally, the study includes a section with recommendations on how to increase the value of the MDIs in developing policy, based on the information obtained for the report. These recommendations are aimed at increasing the MDIs' contribution to fostering a free, pluralistic and independent media landscape that enhances freedom of expression.

Methodology
The paper builds upon more than 20 interviews with the UNESCO field officers who were responsible for the assessments, as well as with the media experts involved in these projects. This information was supplemented by desk-based research on the media-related policy changes that have occurred in the covered countries since the implementation of the MDIs.

1. IMPACT OF THE MDI ASSESSMENTS

A) CONTRIBUTING TO GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES

The impact of the MDI assessments in contributing to the policies of the Government and other national authorities is perhaps the most obvious effect as it implies tangible changes in the legal and policy framework. It is however often problematic to establish, as the process of decision-making inside the governmental offices is frequently opaque and there are numerous actors and other influences at work. Even when policy changes are in line with the MDI-based recommendations, a direct link between the assessments and the subsequent policy changes is difficult to ascertain.

However, several cases of probable impact can be demonstrated and have been explained by the experts and UNESCO CI professionals interviewed within the framework of this study. These professionals have followed the media changes in the different countries and have, in some cases, advised decision-makers during the drafting of the laws and the decrees. It should be underlined that in many of these cases, the MDIs' influence was not the only factor contributing to the policy change. For this reason, the report seeks to specify when, to our knowledge, previous efforts or efforts by other stakeholders have also had a determining role in developing policy.

Generally speaking, the analyzed cases show that the MDI assessments have a greater impact when they are carried out in countries where there is willingness for change, and where policy makers have an interest in identifying ways of improving the enabling environment for a free, independent and pluralistic press. Where a Government is considering media-related reforms, the MDI assessment can be effective in helping to guide them in choices that align with international standards.

For this reason, UNESCO has often prioritized working with interested countries where deep political or social change was taking place (like Tunisia and Egypt) or where the legal framework in which the media operated was undergoing reform (The Maldives and East Timor). In some of these cases, a "rapid assessment" preceded the full assessment to avoid "missing the boat" and producing the report too late. In other countries, the assessments have been linked to the process of development of national media strategies (as it is currently the case in Palestine or South Sudan), or have been carried out at the Government's request, as in Bhutan, Jordan and Mozambique.

It is important to note that even if deep political change is taking place and the MDI assessment responds to a governmental request, there is understandably no guarantee the Government will execute and the Parliament legislate according to the report's recommendations. In addition, even when the recommendations are taken into account in the drafting of new media strategies, policies or laws, the process can be very slow or even be interrupted by changes in Government after elections or political crisis. Alternatively, as one researcher noted, "governmental changes can increase the interest of the decision-makers in the assessments' recommendations". The process of opening a window of opportunity can happen later than the completion of an MDI assessment, but when this happens, reports "can have a second or third life", as one UNESCO CI advisor highlighted.

Finally, it is important to note that the first MDI assessments started in 2008 and many of them have been completed recently, between 2011 and 2013. Therefore, it is possible that a subsequent impact analysis in a few years' time could identify many other examples of impact.

Evidence of policy changes following MDI applications

Bhutan is one of the countries where the assessment, completed in 2010, was carried out at the Government's request and where there was willingness for change among the authorities and the media sector. As a result of a liberalized media policy, the country had experienced a rapid increase of media outlets, mainly print press and private radio. In this context, the UNESCO MDI assessment was implemented with the backing of the King and the Ministry of Information and Communications as part of the modernization programme of the country. According to one of the interviewed experts, the MDI assessment and its recommendations formed the basis of the governmental agenda for a three-year plan on media development.

The MDI assessment recommended the Government to revise and amend the long and intricate existing media law. According to a media development expert familiar with Bhutan, the MDIs contributed to the process of preparation of an amendment to this law, which is expected to be taken to Parliament soon. The Government is also working to separate broadcasting regulation from content regulation, until now jointly under the mandate of the Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA). This action follows the MDI recommendation to "review the BICM Act so as to simplify its provisions and introduce regulations for establishing a Media/Press Council as a self-regulatory mechanism". Specifically, the Administration has asked international consultants to develop a charter for including the creation of an Independent Press Council in the amendment of the media law.

Furthermore, in 2012 the Bhutanese Government provided journalists with financial resources to help them create the Journalists Association of Bhutan (JAB), which may be seen as aligned in part to the MDI recommendation to "create an enabling environment to promote the establishment of associations of media professionals and journalists" inasmuch as the association can retain its professional autonomy. However, the association is still not registered due to legal issues that need to be resolved.

While the MDI assessment noted the rapid increase of media organizations in the country, it emphasized the absence of community media and that "there are no laws facilitating its establishment." Thanks to an IPDC project, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC, went to Bhutan for two weeks in early 2013 to carry out a feasibility study on community radio, which was then submitted to the Government of Bhutan. The study includes recommendations for the Government and indicates the benefits of establishing community radio as the third tier of broadcasting and as a unique, not-for-profit sector in terms of licensing and commercialization of media. A National Consultation on the Development of Community Radio in Bhutan was planned for December 2013 to assess whether the socio-economic and media environment is conducive for community radio to become a reality. The consultation intended to include community media experts and practitioners, media educators and professionals, community-based groups and CSOs.

Overall in Bhutan, the MDI appears to have played a part in catalyzing various media development actions.

In **Tunisia**, the MDI study was implemented after the revolution, and was published in 2012. The most significant change consistent with one of the MDI recommendations is the recent implementation of the Decree-law 2011-116 to set up an Independent Broadcasting Authority (HAICA), whose nine-member composition was announced by the President on 3 May 2013, World Press Freedom Day. In his speech President Moncef Marzouki said he chose to announce the establishment of HAICA on World Press Freedom Day because of this date being "of great personal significance". He also requested UNESCO's

support for the new Authority. Importantly, in January 2014 following recommendations in the MDI report, **Tunisia** adopted several constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression and the right to information and an article to restrict any limitations to these. [1]

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (HAICA) – an independent regulator - is "the first of this kind in the Arab World", according to one of the interviewed experts. Stakeholders such as the Journalists Union and the National Authority for the Reform of Information and Communication (INRIC) had called for its creation. Several interviewed experts mentioned that the MDIs were a significant contributing factor. The HAICA will be responsible for designating the heads of public media, attributing television and radio frequencies for new media, and monitoring speaking time given to political parties by audiovisual media during election periods. In March 2014, a workshop convened by the Coalition civile pour la défense de la liberté d'expression (CCDLE), contributed to by UNESCO, further underlined the importance of an independent public broadcaster as part of a mixed system which includes public, private and community media, again a theme in the MDI report. One author of the Tunisian MDI analysis has added that the recommendation on the reduction of fees for radio and television services is also having an impact, in combination with pressure from other stakeholders.

In sum, the MDI assessment in Tunisia, in combination with other UNESCO activities and many other social forces, has fed into a process of effective media reform in line with international standards.

The MDI assessment of **Croatia** was finished in 2011. It is possible to identify changes that are aligned to the MDI report recommendations, in particular an increase in governmental funding to community media. The MDI assessment carried out in the country was one of the first documents to mention community media in Croatia. Therefore, it can be presumed that the research has contributed to policy change. According to the main author, although the report was sent to the Ministry of Culture, initially there was no evidence of the recommendations being taken into account. Nevertheless, since the four-party center-left coalition bloc won the elections in December 2011, the assessment is being considered by decision-makers, as the government's decision to provide funding to community media suggests.

One country where the Government has demonstrated a clear interest in the MDI assessment is **Gabon.** The MDI recommendations can be found on the [official webpage](#) of the Ministry of Digital Economy, Communications and Post. As a result of the report, which recommended to "encourage community media, dedicated to marginalized and disadvantaged groups, through the allocation of aid to these media" [2], the Gabonese administration has started to fund community media.

According to one of the researchers involved in the Gabon MDI process, the transformation of the public television Gabon TV into an autonomous company is also directly related to the MDI assessment, which recommended more autonomy for public media by "strengthening the role of the *Conseil National de la Communication* in preselecting managers of public radio and television channels in accordance with the law, to strengthen public media public service and editorial independence".

The Maldives decriminalized defamation in November 2011, which can be in part attributed one of the MDI report's recommendations. The report, launched in 2009, appears to have helped to promote this modification of the Penal Code and the [abolition of five articles on criminal defamation](#), as well as to

---

[1] These were adopted after the completion of the report on January 6th 2014.

introduce a human rights perspective in this legal change, in the view of the lead researcher in this assessment.

There are also cases where the MDIs have made a contribution to policy-making even if an actual MDI application has yet not been carried out. For example in **Myanmar**, where discussions on the MDIs with decision makers and stakeholders in several conferences have played a positive role in opening the way for policy changes. The abolishment of prior censorship, the drafting of new media laws, the establishment of an interim press council and the re-emergence of Myanmar's first private daily newspapers are some of the many milestones achieved during 2012.

Myanmar experienced a major transition in 2012 when the military junta decided to step back and a civilian government was established. The new Government announced its willingness to reform the media sector, where all weekly print media had been subjected to prior censorship and the only daily paper was government-run. One of the most closed countries of the world decided to open itself. In this unique context, UNESCO organized together with International Media Support (IMS) and under a project funded by Canal France International a [Conference on media development in Myanmar](#) in March 2012, which was structured around the MDI indicators. According to one of the UNESCO professionals involved, this conference succeeded in establishing the foundations for the work of the media development community in the country.

The positive results of the initiative were possible because of the willingness of the Government and its readiness to work with international partners to integrate internationally based standards At the opening of a [Second Conference](#) organized in May 2013 by the Ministry of Information and the Myanmar Media Development Thematic Working Group (MDTWG), UNESCO and IMS, Minister for Information, U Aung Kyi stated, "this one year's journey of media development has shown the importance of committed ties between the Government, UNESCO, IMS, the interim press council, the local and international media institutions and civil society. Our country's media reform cannot be fully accomplished without the active participation of all of you". [3]

ii)   The MDIs as an advocacy tool in policy-changing processes

The second part of this sub-section deals with the cases in which the MDI assessments are helping in advocating for change, even if policy changes have still not taken place. From an advocacy point of view, an authorized and non-partisan assessment of the media landscape by UNESCO can, where there is a coincidence of recommendations, increase the level of authority of the claims coming from the media sector and other CSOs.

The MDIs are a powerful advocacy instrument for civil society and media activists working for freedom of expression. Many experts have argued that the MDIs are a very useful and necessary accompaniment to the legal mechanisms in the international human rights system related to freedom of expression. One of the interviewees described, "before the existence of this tool, all the international legitimacy related to the complex media sector had to be based on the few lines of the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the standards included in the joint declarations of the Special Rapporteurs of the UN and the regional systems".

---

[3] An MDI assessment was launched in the country in early 2014, after the completion of this report.

Even without the issue of advocacy by non-state actors, however, many governments have taken seriously the recommendations of MDI reports in preparing for reform. This is because the power of the MDIs as a tool for advocacy derives from its legitimacy. A strength is that they have been approved by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council, and thus by 39 Member States representing proportionally all the regions of the world. There is wide agreement on the indicators, as emphasized by several interviewed international legal experts.

Experience has shown that raising awareness of the existence of the indicators can already have an impact. In some countries, as outlined below, before starting the implementation of the assessment, awareness-rising about the tool at conferences already led to advocacy actions and even contributed to policy changes.

Practical examples

In **Egypt,** as in Tunisia, a rapid assessment preceded the full MDI application soon after the Arab uprisings in view of not missing momentum. The complicated political situation of the last two years and in particular after the events in June-July 2013 that led to President Mohamed Morsi's removal from power has since blocked media-related policy changes. However, UNESCO is using the MDI report as an advocacy tool, and the assessment (available in Arabic) has provided the Egyptian media community with strong guidance.

The overthrown Government had been undertaking an access to information law reform. The draft law was made public in January 2013. According to the Communication and Information (CI) advisor and to an international expert involved in the study, the MDI recommendations related to Freedom of Information had contributed to convincing the former Government, together with advocacy efforts coming from many from civil society organizations and from the World Bank, on the need for this reform. Discussions have continued with one of the post-Morsi governments, and will be resumed when feasible.

In parallel with the commencement of the full MDI assessment, UNESCO started working on the implementation of the recommendations of the interim report regarding community media and self-regulation. Firstly, UNESCO organized a conference with the participation of international experts who explained how these areas could be developed in accordance with international standards. As a result of the conference, steering committees were created to draft policy and legal papers to accommodate these issues to the Egyptian legal and political environment. UNESCO also organized an [International Conference in Support of Broadcast Media in Tunisia and Egypt](#) in Paris in May 2011, after the initial findings of the rapid assessments in the two countries. This event focused on the need to foster editorially independent public service broadcasting. It also unlocked a range of international resources and partnerships in work with state-owned media in these countries. In time, it may be that a new window of opportunity for media reform in line with international standards will arise, and the MDI assessment will then be able to provide valuable guidance to stakeholders.

In **Tunisia** the MDI assessment has helped strengthen advocacy efforts of media-related civil society organizations, although more time will be needed to see this work translated into policy-making. Many of the recommendations had not yet have been implemented as discussions on the new Constitution had only just started when this study on the MDIs' impact was being undertaken (July 2013), and elections for a new government were awaited. Nevertheless, according to an international expert

involved in the Tunisian MDI, "the report has certainly contributed to the awareness on internationally agreed standards of the members of the National Assembly, responsible for the new Constitution".

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Frank La Rue, endorsed the recommendations of the MDI study during his visit to Tunisia in April 2013, which was facilitated by UNESCO. La Rue held informal meetings with various officials, including the President, Moncef Marzouki, the Speaker of the National Constituent Assembly, Mustapha Ben Jafaar, and the Prime Minister, Ali Laarayed, and advocated for the completion of the legal and regulatory framework to guarantee freedom of expression and press freedom in Tunisia.

Guy Berger, UNESCO's Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development held a [meeting](#) in June 2013 with the Deputy-President of the country's National Constituent Assembly (NCA), Mehrezia Laabidi, to discuss Tunisia's draft Constitution. Referring to the recommendations of the MDI assessment in the country, Berger highlighted how some draft provisions in the Constitution could be improved so as to better meet international standards. Berger also participated at a conference organized by the Tunisian presidency on media during the transitional period.

Only after the establishment of the new Constitution and subsequent elections will it be possible to see to what extent all recommendations have been considered. For the moment, interviewees that work in the country believe the MDI assessment is currently at the forefront of the resources that civil society (for example, National Union of Journalists and Civil Coalition for freedom of expression) is using for justifying their actions and claims.

The UNESCO CI field officer in **Gabon** mentions that one of the main reasons for launching the MDI study there was to have an effective advocacy instrument to present to decision-makers. The Minister of Communication, to whom the document was submitted, assured that the government would take it into account for every reform concerning the media sector. The MDI assessment contributed to the process of revision of the media law and to awareness-raising on the role of community media. UNESCO was also asked to provide comments on the draft media law to the responsible Commission - some of which have been taken into account. This draft media law, elaborated by the Ministry of Communication and currently at the Presidency level, has integrated community media and online media for the first time and has removed any reference to the Criminal Court. The MDI assessment has improved the relationship between the UNESCO Libreville Office and the Government, according to the interviewed UNESCO field officer.

The MDI assessment of **Bolivia** (in its final stage) will be used to provide comprehensive and neutral information to the authorities, who have announced the development of a new Law on Information and Communication to replace the law that is currently regulating journalism and dates back to 1925. According to the leading author of the assessment, the identification of contradictions, ambiguities and gaps related to freedom of expression in the current regulations, together with the advocacy efforts that will follow the launching of the assessment, will contribute to the drafting of a new law according to democratic principles.

In **Croatia**, while the Ministry of Culture is working on a new media strategy, policy-makers are aware of the MDI assessment and its authors are being consulted. In the year following the launching of the report, the Centre for Communication Research of the University of Zagreb organized an [International Conference on Public Service Broadcasting](#) where the roles, functions and values of public service broadcasters were discussed. The UNESCO-supported event was a follow-up of the assessments'

recommendations on public service broadcasting and enabled the discussion of a legislative proposal to change the legal definition of the Croatian public television, HRT, its financing and management.

The MDI process can be very effective in accompanying media reform efforts. In **South Sudan**, for example, the assessment was being implemented in 2013 as the Government was drafting three new media bills. The MDI can continue to be an important contribution for the implementation of policies and other media development activities. According to the responsible field officer, this is the first comprehensive study on the media sector in the country and, once it is published, the assessment will be used as an advocacy and planning tool by the Media Sector Working Group, which was created in September 2011 and brings together local stakeholders, UN agencies and donors.

In **Jordan,** during the Arab uprisings and as a reaction to the protests beginning in the country, the King announced a series of reforms which included the media. UNESCO contributed to this process at the specific request of the Government with the implementation of a quick partial MDI assessment covering categories 1, 3 and 4. Although the UNESCO recommendations have not to date been taken into account by decision-makers, the establishment of partnerships and the common advocacy efforts around this reform, which brought together different stakeholders, can be seen as the first achievements of this assessment.

In **Brazil**, the MDIs were being used as an advocacy instrument with the Government even before the implementation of the assessment. In 2010, the Government organized the International Seminar of Electronic Communications and Media Convergence to discuss media regulation reform in Brazil and UNESCO was invited to present the standards included in the MDI framework at this event, attended by more than 500 decision makers and stakeholders in the field of media. After English, the Portuguese version of the Media Development indicators on UNESCO's webpage was the second most consulted language version in 2010.

The former Minister of Communication recognized in discussions with the UNESCO field officer responsible for Brazil that the Government took the MDIs very much into account when producing the draft for the new media regulatory strategy, however, as this draft had not been sent to the Parliament by the time this report was completed, the policy changes are still not visible.

In **Uruguay**, a UNESCO CI specialist working in the region highlighted that the MDI document was being used by Government officials in 2013 to elaborate a new law on audiovisual services.

B) GUIDING MEDIA-RELATED INTERVENTIONS LED BY OTHER MEDIA STAKEHOLDERS

While policy-makers constitute one of the primary audiences for the MDI assessments, the mapping of gaps included in MDI reports is also used by other stakeholders such as media organizations, journalist associations, local and international NGOs, CSOs and other organizations. A prominent media-law expert adds that "having these written documents on the media framework that people can turn back to when designing development projects is very valuable".

The MDI assessment in Tunisia, for example, was "well received by media professionals, who saw it essentially as a map of the national media landscape", according to one of its authors. The CI officer responsible for the project explained that the MDI study also helped international actors such as the Council of Europe, and the French and Swiss development agencies, to develop their activities in this field. In East Timor, according to another UNESCO CI-officer who worked in the country, "many international organizations who wanted to work on media development did not know the areas in which their work was most required, and the MDI report provided a good framework to learn what efforts were most needed regarding legislation, journalism training and infrastructure".

Having a clear and updated image of the media landscape as a guide for programming helps stakeholders in convincing donors on the necessity of conducting projects in specific areas, based on objectively identified priorities. In Mozambique, the MDI assessment is quoted extensively in the project documents of international organizations that were developed in the years following the assessment, according to a media development expert. One example is the five-year, 10 million USD project Media Strengthening Program for Mozambique (MSP) funded by USAID. This programme, launched in 2012 and coordinated by IREX, will focus on journalism education, supporting community radio management and programming, and strengthening collaboration among journalists, professional organizations and media advocacy groups, activities which are fully aligned with the MDI report's recommendations.

i) Examples of stakeholder interventions related to Category 3: Media as a platform for democratic discourse

Recommendations regarding self-regulation

In several cases, the MDI recommendations regarding self-regulatory mechanisms have been taken into account by media professionals, who have started to work on the development of codes on conduct and other self-regulatory mechanisms. For example, the recommendations of the rapid partial MDI assessment in **Jordan** on the importance of establishing self-regulatory mechanisms were taken seriously by local media professionals, who agreed on the need for an independent self-regulatory body and created possible models and a roadmap towards enactment. This was a contribution of the MDI process and the UNESCO CI officer in the country suggests that "before there was no awareness of the importance of self-regulation". A two-day retreat at the Dead Sea was organized by UNESCO to discuss the need for a self-regulatory media body in Jordan. It brought together 20 press freedom advocates and media regulation specialists and involved high-level government representation from the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Political Development and the Ministry of Social Development. Currently UNESCO is planning to develop an Action Plan on this issue to keep its leading role in coordinating and mediating between the Government, CSOs and the media.

In **Egypt**, a steering committee composed of major media stakeholders worked in 2013 on a policy document on the establishment of a self-regulatory body. The interviewed UNESCO CI advisor in Cairo noted that the activities to develop an Egyptian journalistic code of conduct started after the finalization of the interim MDI assessment and while the full MDI study was being implemented, and underlined that these efforts were clearly linked with UNESCO's recommendations. The creation of a working group on the establishment of an independent body for complaints adjudication was the first result of a Conference on self-regulation organized by UNESCO in May 2012 with the participation of international experts. Five months later, the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, with support from UNESCO, hosted a Second conference on self-regulation where many prominent Egyptian journalists and public figures contributed to the discussion, including the Advisor to the President of Egypt, Anwar Al-Sayed, and various members of the Constitutional Assembly. If conditions allow, the initiative could continue in 2014 with the MDI continuing to serve as a resource.

In **Tunisia**, the public television organization began producing a draft code of conduct during 2013, which the international expert involved in the assessment says "is influenced by the MDIs recommendations, even if it is only a draft at this stage".

In **Gabon**, the revision of the Media Professional Charter can be also considered a direct result of the MDI assessment, according to the involved CI officer. Before the implementation of the MDIs the process was not planned and many of the interviewed professionals did not know about the existence of this Charter, established in 1995 by the state-controlled regulatory body. The revised code of conduct, which will belong to the media professionals, was in 2013 undergoing the process of being signed and validated by all the media organizations. The project has been possible thanks to IPDC funding.

In **East Timor**, the MDI recommendations have contributed to efforts to establish an independent Press Council. UNESCO followed one of the MDI assessment's recommendations on the need to strengthen media self-regulation in the country, particularly by conducting 25 face-to-face interviews with local media stakeholders such as journalists, representatives of all the major journalist associations, policy makers, media development agencies, donors and UN agencies to identify the specific needs and challenges related to the establishment of a press council in the country and to initiate the necessary steps. This programmatic intervention is a direct outcome of the MDI and therefore an example of the opening of opportunities for engagement. The effort to establish the self-regulatory body is being supported through IPDC funding.

In **Ecuador**, journalists have started to work on a self-regulation guide for the country's print media, which will also consider women's representation in media content. This action, which follows the MDI assessment's recommendations, was launched by the Guild of Journalists of Pichincha (CPP) and the Ecuadorian Association of Newspaper Publishers (AEDEP) thanks to an IPDC project on self-regulation aimed at providing training for management staff, editors and journalists on these issues.

In **Uruguay,** the MDI framework was used by journalists in discussions that have led to the first journalistic Code of ethics of the country in April 2013, according to the CI advisor responsible for the project. This project was again supported by UNESCO´s IPDC.

Recommendations regarding safety of journalists

In the area of journalists' safety, many activities have been launched, in particular in the Arab Region, that are in line with, and did not exist before, the MDI assessment recommendations.

In **Tunisia**, security forces of the Ministry of Interior are being trained, together with journalists, on freedom of expression, freedom of press and the security of media workers. The programme, which follows one of the assessment's recommendations on promoting the safety of journalists,[4] includes a series of training courses for members of the Ministry of Interior's security forces (Police, National Guard and Emergency Preparedness services) and the adoption by the Ministry of Interior of a code of conduct for members of its security forces to improve relations with media professionals.

In Egypt, a similar project will be launched in 2013 with the police academy and the union of journalists to build mutual trust and promote understanding between the two professions. The programme is based on one of the assessment's recommendations on the need to train security forces about freedom of expression.[5]

ii)   Examples of interventions related to Category 4 and 5: Professional capacity building and infrastructural capacity

The **Bhutan** Media and Communications Institute (BMCI) was registered as a media training institute by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources in January 2012. This recognition can be considered as an indirect contribution of the MDI assessment, implemented in 2010, which had highlighted "the dearth of trained journalists (…) because there are no training institutes in Bhutan". UNESCO is providing equipment and resources to this first journalistic training center through an IPDC project to build the center's institutional capacity by developing the journalism curriculum in the local language (Dzongkha) and by promoting separate training workshops for managers of media houses, journalists and photojournalists.

In **Tunisia**, according to an interviewee from the Institut Français working in the country, the study has been beneficial for validating and planning training courses. One of the authors of the study also highlighted that the African Centre for Training of Journalists and Communicators (CAPJC) and the Institute for Press and Information Sciences (IPSI) are further investing in facilities and developing their training offer, as well as maintaining their political independence, as was recommended in the Tunisian MDI assessment.

---

[4] Public authorities have to put in place trainings and procedures to guarantee the safety of journalists, media workers and media organizations against any type of threat, harassment or physical aggression.
[5] Effective measures should be put in place to address the problem of attacks on media workers, with a specific focus on safety of women journalists, which should also include a training component for security personnel.

C) ENHANCING DIALOGUE, EMPOWERMENT AND CAPACITY BUIDING

i) Opening a dialogue

The implementation of the MDI assessment facilitates the opening of a dialogue and the creation of relationships between decision-makers, journalist associations, media organizations, CSOs and national and international NGOs working in the media sector. These interactions and contacts can be very useful for knowledge sharing, cooperation and confidence-building.

Several interviewees mentioned that the process of implementing the MDIs is a period of permanent contact with the various media actors, who have the possibility to express themselves about their vision and needs. Furthermore, UNESCO has a unique capacity to bring governments into the process together with NGOs, research institutions and local media and international organizations.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, for example, through the process of discussion and consultations organized during the implementation of the MDIs, the Government realized that it would be beneficial to launch a national debate on media and started its own initiative. The Administration established a Media Development Committee involving a wide range of actors such as the National Council for the Print Media (CNP) and the Observatory for Press Freedom and Professional Ethics (OLPED). The CI officer responsible for Côte d'Ivoire considers this decision as a very positive first outcome of the MDI assessment, even before the publication of the report. The list of priorities of the Committee includes journalism education and working on a Freedom of Information Act, the establishment of a Public Service Broadcaster and the decriminalization of libel, are all issues highlighted in the MDI assessment report that is currently undergoing review before its official launching and publication.

In other countries like **Ecuador**, the exercise took place in a highly polarized environment, characterized in particular by tensions between the Government, which was working on a new media law, and the private media. According to the interviewed experts, the MDI research established a common ground between the rival parties. The main UNESCO field officer involved claimed that the Organization managed "to provide space for a new dialogue in a saturated debate". Thus, one of the first results of the assessment was that it succeeded in bringing together all the actors around the same table in a fractured period and to produce a document, which was finally validated and endorsed by all the major actors of the country, including the Government and the private media.

As one of the MDI experts observes, in polarized contexts, it may be difficult for a neutral research exercise to have an effective impact because the different parties tend to consider only the results that are in line with their own views. However, in the case of Ecuador, the MDI assessment positioned UNESCO as a neutral organization working with all the other actors. The MDI can be a tool that promotes UNESCO's role as an honest broker in this process, according to a UNESCO CI advisor.

In **Bolivia**, where the atmosphere has also been polarized between the Government and some private media companies, the involvement of UNESCO via the MDIs is appreciated. A consultative group composed of 19 members representing journalists associations, academics, media organizations and the Government has valued the quality and relevance of the assessment (still undergoing its last revision at the time this report was compiled). The process has opened the possibility for creating other discussion forums aimed at influencing public debate, according to one of the authors of the study.

ii) Empowerment and capacity building

The process of the MDI implementation can empower the stakeholders involved. The academic partners who carry out the research conduct a review of existing literature on media and conduct interviews and/or surveys to address the different indicators in order to have a complete overview of the media landscape of the country and how it compares to international standards. The interviewed actors and those who participate in the various meetings, focus groups or validation conferences are also empowered by the use of the tool and the discussions. In countries like Bhutan, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Mozambique, Palestine and Tunisia, the interviewees have underlined how the tool has helped local stakeholders to acquire a better understanding of international standards in the field of media.

As one expert explained, the MDI assessments stimulate discussion on many topics which were not being deliberated upon in the media environment before. Self-regulation, for example, is one of the items that started being considered in several countries after the implementation of the assessment.

Especially for the persons directly involved in the preparation of the MDI reports, the process is a very effective and intense knowledge transfer experience, with results said to be often much greater than any capacity-building in workshops or training courses. The cooperation between national and international consultants has proven to be beneficial for both sides. One of the authors of one MDI study explains that "for international experts it is difficult to go to the micro-level of detail without the national research support, while the first contribute with their thorough knowledge on international legislation". According to another interviewee "after the assessment, a group of local experts has an overview and a comprehensive knowledge on international standards, which is something that in most other countries practically no one has".

For the national academic institutions who implement the assessments, the MDIs give them the possibility to carry out high-level research and in some cases to work in partnership with some of the most experienced international experts in this field. In Palestine, the MDI process is building the research capacities of Birzeit University´s Media Development Center (BZUMDC). The training sessions organized within this framework have contributed to enhancing the knowledge of the researchers involved about international standards in the media sector. Similarly, in the cases of the CIESPAL, who developed the assessment in Ecuador and the Center for Media and Communication Research of the University of Zagreb there is a belief that the MDI assessments have helped to validate and increase their research capacities. In Uganda, the students at Makarere University learnt how to carry out field research in rural areas, which according to one of the UNESCO professionals who followed the project was a valuable experience for the students.

D) IMPACT FOR UNESCO

i) Strengthening UNESCO's position as an active, neutral and credible actor in media development

The MDI reports are assessments using an internationally recognized methodological tool, which was developed through a participatory process, taking into account good practices determined by international standards as well as drawing from empirical experience in many countries. Many of the interviewees have described the tool as the most comprehensive, objective and neutral instrument that exists for assessing the media environment, and the one that is most likely to be accepted by stakeholders.

Several UNESCO staff members have explained the value of the MDIs in supporting UNESCO's recommendations in the media field. One staff member says "unlike the Culture Sector of UNESCO, which has several binding Conventions signed by Member States, historically in the Communication and Information Sector we had nothing similar. Thus, even if the indicators are not binding, this UNESCO document helps us a lot". Other interviewed UNESCO staff members working in the field offices share this view and consider the MDIs as a pillar for the work of the Organization in media development. One stated "before the existence of the document, it was much more difficult for us to convince and give support to what we are saying. When I go on mission this publication is always with me".

The legitimacy of the tool is very much related to its neutrality. The MDIs do not reflect the interests of the Government, the private media or the journalist associations, and they identify challenges and responsibilities for all the actors. The instrument is firmly grounded on universally agreed international standards on freedom of expression, and enjoys the endorsement of the 39 Member States of UNESCO's IPDC intergovernmental Council.

For these reasons, the MDIs have also gained recognition from major media development actors, including UNDP, the World Bank, the International Federation of Journalists, the Media Foundation for West Africa, the Doha Centre for Media Freedom, International Media Support, and others. The Council of Europe (see Resolution 1636 (2008) has said it "welcomes the UNESCO media development indicators […] which shall help determine communication development strategies within the overall context of national development".

Generating unique data and knowledge on communication and information is also beneficial for UNESCO's reputation in the media development field. Several interviewees have emphasized that the MDIs give credibility to the Communication and Information Sector and the Organization. This vision was confirmed by one of the researchers involved in an MDI assessment, who stated that the reputation of UNESCO was very positive not just as a political organization but also as an organization that does quality research. It can be concluded that the MDIs give UNESCO added visibility and credibility. They show UNESCO's investment in understanding and analyzing the media landscapes of the countries in which media law reforms or other media-related projects are being planned.

Another point connected to the Organization's credibility in relation with the MDIs is the capability to respond quickly when there is a request of the Government to assess the media scene and its challenges, as it was the case in Bhutan or Jordan. This capacity has served to position the Organization as a credible, neutral and specialized UN agency that can react quickly, also in countries where deep and fast political changes affect the media landscape, as was the case in Egypt or Tunisia.

Several other organizations have appropriated the MDIs for their own initiatives, reinforcing UNESCO as an internationally recognized standard-setter. In Somalia, Albany Associates analyzed the country's legal and regulatory framework to produce a roadmap for legal reform. The MDI methodology was introduced when UNESCO became involved at the end of the project and the Somalia Media Strategy Group, a group of donors and implementers chaired by UNESCO, formally accepted this analysis as the roadmap for a very active discussion on the media law. Many of the subsequent recommendations have been adopted or are in process of being implemented. For example, stakeholders are working on creating an independent communications and broadcasting regulator and on an independent Public Service Broadcasting network in line with international standards. In addition, civil society organizations are being actively consulted on these issues, according to one of its authors.

In **Benin**, Denmark's development cooperation, DANIDA, funded an MDI assessment carried out by Media Foundation for West Africa. Another MDI assessment is taking place in Qatar at the initiative of the Doha Centre for Media Freedom.

ii) Framework for strategic planning of CI activities and IPDC projects

The clear and comprehensive picture of the media needs of a country that results from an MDI assessment is also useful for UNESCO to program effective media development activities and to carry out effective fund-raising.

The face-to-face interviews conducted during the assessments are crucial to learn about the current situation from the stakeholders' perspective and to understand their specific needs. The MDIs assessments allow UNESCO to establish the CI priorities in a country and to design projects that respond to the real needs of the local partners. As one CI-advisor explains, the MDI reports "put everything on the table with clear recommendations to follow; they give you a four-year vision on how to move on".

The MDI assessments contribute to providing rigour to the work of the Organization by guiding strategic planning. The findings of the MDI assessments are used by UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector in designing its work plans and defining its priorities as well as to promote IPDC projects – as many of the examples included in first section of this paper confirm.

The MDI recommendations have also been very useful to design convincing project documents, which have helped the Organization to obtain significant extra-budgetary funding. In Jordan, for example, UNESCO was chosen by the European Commission as the implementing partner for a major project on *Enhancing Media Coverage of Elections*. The MDI recommendations on the training of journalists were used by UNESCO to apply for these funds from the European Union, and thanks to the project, numerous capacity-building programmes have been developed in Jordan, such as a workshop to promote independent media coverage of the parliamentary elections and trainings on investigative journalism and gender-sensitive reporting in elections. The granting of the EU funding to conduct this project can be considered, according to several UNESCO officers involved in the country, as a positive consequence of the MDI assessment.

In Myanmar, the conferences on media development organized in 2012 and 2013 and the analysis of the capacity-building needs of the country according to the MDIs have enabled UNESCO to create a project based on the identified needs and to obtain supplementary funds from the European Commission to implement a project on electoral reporting, journalism ethics and gender-sensitive journalism.

iii) Establishment of partnerships and synergies with other organizations working in the country

UNESCO has already engaged in several partnerships with organizations to carry out joint assessments of national media landscapes. This secures much-needed additional funding and human resources for the implementation of the assessments. The partnership with International Media Support (IMS) and UNDP in Bhutan, with IMS in Iraq and South Sudan and with UNDP in East Timor are a few examples of cooperation with other international organizations working in the media or governance field.

When it comes to local organizations one of the lead researchers of the ongoing Brazil MDI assessment says "the call coming from UNESCO is a strong call that builds a momentum around media reform". Through the MDI assessments, UNESCO has demonstrated its capacity to coordinate and mediate between the Government, CSOs, media companies, media representatives and international organizations.

According to one expert, UNESCO should continue to use the MDI assessment as an opportunity to put itself in a leading role in organizing discussion with donors, development agencies and all the other actors working in the media development field to take stock of what they are individually doing to cover these needs and attempt to enhance the coordination of efforts. This experience could be piloted in one country.

The assessments also facilitate the establishment of academic partnerships between research institutions in the media field, as has been the case in Croatia, where the Centre for Media and Communication Research (CIM) of the University of Zagreb has established a partnership with the University of Belgrade and the Macedonian Media Institute to implement a regional assessment. In Uruguay, the five universities with Communication Studies will implement together the assessment, which received funding from the IPDC but also from the *Agencia Nacional de Investigación e Innovación (National Research and Innovation Agency)*.

Finally, UNESCO has started using the MDI assessments to brief the different UN agencies working in the country on what is needed in the media field and to try to establish common projects.

2. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE THE IMPACT OF THE MDIs

Follow-up activities are key to generate attention and debate among stakeholders and policy makers, as well as to create impact and to promote resource mobilization. The majority of the analyzed countries have promoted a wide range of activities following the assessments' recommendations. This section of the paper provides an overview of these activities organized by type before proposing a set of recommendations that can be useful for all other countries undertaking an MDI assessment.

A) WHAT IS BEING DONE

National validation conferences

In many countries (as in Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt or Mozambique, for example) national conferences were organized to validate the findings of the studies. The multi-stakeholder involvement ensured at these conferences gives validity to the report, helps to raise awareness about the results of the assessment, and builds momentum for effective follow-up.

The validation conferences are the culmination of a participatory process which includes wide-ranging consultations and, in some cases, the creation of advisory committees representing the variety of stakeholders involved in the media sector to provide input and guidance to the research team or the organization of consultation meetings. In Palestine, a conference involving some 120 participants in both the West Bank and Gaza was organized in July 2013 to discuss the initial findings of the research, attracting high-level government participation.

Involving a wide variety of stakeholders, including governmental representatives at these conferences as well as in the whole MDI process can be helpful for ensuring effective follow-up. In Egypt, for example, almost 200 people participated in the validation conference in March 2013 in the Cairo University Faculty of Journalism. The event was presided over by the then Minister of Information, who accepted the work publicly. In Croatia, a Conference to discuss the application of the indicators was held under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić, bringing together a variety of experts from Central and South-East Europe, including academics, media professionals and policy makers.

In some countries, as in Bhutan or Croatia, these events have been followed up by discussions to design the national media strategy, building upon the opportunity they provide of having all the relevant media stakeholders of the country already gathered together. In Croatia, the conference discussed and adopted "The New Media Agenda for Croatia 2009", which came out of the results of the analysis of the five areas of the UNESCO indicators.

Visibility strategy and distribution of the assessment

In almost all the countries, the media have been invited to the public launch to ensure publicity for the report and its visibility not only within the media community.

Many countries have organized successful **press conferences,** for example in Ecuador and Tunisia where the success of the conferences was reflected in the extensive media coverage (collection of press clippings available).

UNESCO has begun considering the position of the different media outlets and their interests in sharing the report's recommendations and the existence of social media or independent journalists, who could be interested in informing the public about the MDI's recommendations. In Brazil, for example, despite the MDI assessment not yet being completed "a strategy to launch the assessment and its recommendations by targeting social media, traditional media and independent journalists has already been drafted", according to one of the authors.

Many of the UNESCO offices have ensured a wide distribution of the report to all the relevant stakeholders. In Tunisia, for example, the MDI assessment was published in French, Arabic and English, and disseminated among CSOs (Tunisian Journalists Union, Federation of Media Owners Union), national authorities including the Prime Minister's Office and the Presidency of the Republic, representatives of the National Constituent Assembly, international organizations (UN, European Union, Council of Europe, Reporters Without Borders) and journalist training institutions (IPSI, CAP-JC). The study was also transmitted to all members of the HAICA, the new regulatory body for audio-visual media created in May 2013.

Designing of extra-budgetary and IPDC project proposals

UNESCO field offices regularly use the MDIs recommendations to work on extra-budgetary project proposals, including for the IPDC, seeking to address some of the media development gaps identified by the assessments. The assessments have also contributed to convincing donors on the importance of undertaking actions related to media development and funding extra-budgetary projects.

Conferences and meetings with decision-makers and donors

After the public launch and the distribution of the assessment, many field offices have worked on promoting the implementation of the project's recommendations by organizing conferences and meetings. In Tunisia, as has previously mentioned, the field office organized the UNESCO Director of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Guy Berger, to meet with relevant Tunisian stakeholders including members of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA), in charge of drafting the new Constitution. In Egypt and in Bhutan, the UNESCO CI advisors held meetings with the Ministers of Information to present them the reports' recommendations.

Meetings involving donors have also been promoted after the launching of the reports. In Egypt, for example, the office had planned a meeting for the end of July 2013 at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador (the country that funded the MDI assessment) to present and discuss the recommendations with local decision-makers and representatives of the embassies of the countries that are most active in media development, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union. Unfortunately, the meeting was cancelled due to the political instability and the change of the Government in July 2013.

World Press Freedom Day (WPFD) has been used as an occasion to promote follow-up in countries such as Tunisia or Gabon. For WPFD 2013 in Gabon and as a response to an MDI recommendation, UNESCO coordinated a meeting at which seven media organizations drafted a Manifesto for the decriminalization of press offences and which was addressed to the Government. The organization was successful in involving the Ministry of Justice, in this initiative which appointed a representative to participate in the drafting of the document. The activity was useful in building confidence between the participants and as a knowledge building exercise for media organizations on how to write a Manifesto. Moreover, the representatives of the Government learnt about defamation, the importance of its decriminalization and the media's request for this.

Presentations in UNCT meetings and integration in the UNDAF

Another way to promote the recommendations of the MDI assessments is through their presentation at the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) bimonthly meetings. A briefing to the heads of UN agencies in the country about the MDI recommendations is an action that has been planned by the field offices in Egypt and Gabon. The recommendations can also be integrated under the Governance component in the United Nations Development and Assistance Framework (UNDAF), a five-year agreement between the UN and the Member State, in order to ensure more legitimacy to and encourage funding for work in this area. A reference to the MDIs has already been made in the first UNDAF prepared for Palestine in 2013.

Periodic revision of the assessment

A positive follow-up action that has been decided by the Centre for Media and Communication Research (CIM) of the University of Zagreb is the periodic revision of the assessment every two years. A similar initiative could be envisaged in the cases where the academic institution that carried out the initial MDI assessment is strong enough to take ownership of this process.

In parallel, the CIM is currently coordinating a regional MDI assessment together with the University of Belgrade and the Macedonian Media Institute. The regional assessment, which will be finalized at the end of 2013, includes the revision of the Croatian report, the MDI-based assessment of the Serbian and Macedonian media systems, as well as comparative chapters.

One CI advisor suggested that annual meetings be set up between different stakeholders to discuss developments that have happened in the media sector since the publication of the report. This kind of follow-up activity could be interesting for all parties concerned and would enable UNESCO and the local media community to have a constantly updated version of the assessment.

Exploring innovative applications of the MDIs in the field of academia

The Centre for Media and Communication Research (CIM) of the University of Zagreb organized a research conference and postgraduate course in Dubrovnik from 2 to 5 April 2012 to engage academics in the region in a thorough evaluation of the MDIs as a methodology for media analysis, as well as comparing the MDI framework with other theoretical models. Currently, CIM is coordinating a regional MDI-assessment together with the University of Belgrade and the Macedonian Media Institute, the first effort to produce a comparative analysis based on the MDIs.

In Libya, UNESCO staff members are working on a project to link a partial assessment of Category 4 of the MDI indicators (capacity-building) to a process of journalism curriculum revision in the country. Assessing the media education landscape using the MDIs will make it possible to display the current needs in the area of capacity building and training of media professionals as well as to have baseline data with which to measure ongoing and forthcoming initiatives.

B) RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Choose countries where reforms are planned or taking place and/or where there is willingness for change

The MDIs is a research exercise that is also aimed at ensuring a concrete impact through the implementation of its recommendations. There therefore needs to be a minimum of national consensus on the need for reform in order for the MDI exercise to be fully effective. With a receptive audience and willingness for change, impact is likely to be stronger. Consequently, criteria must be strategically defined for the selection of countries in which assessments are carried out.

2) Select academic partners that can take ownership of the project

The selection of committed and credible local academic institutions that can take ownership of the MDI process, once the initial assessment completed, enhances the possibility of follow-up activities such as periodic updating of the MDI assessments (for example, on a biennial basis) or innovative applications of the MDIs. Ensuring proper training of the research team is an important step to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills with regard to the MDIs.

3) Strengthen visibility efforts

The recognition of the MDIs as an internationally validated methodological tool should be further stimulated by UNESCO, who should integrate the results of the MDI assessments even more in its own work and should promote the tool and the reports at conferences, in the academic arena and through advocacy. UNESCO should work towards making the reports and the MDI framework a must-read reference for decision-makers, media development organizations and donors.

The public launching of the assessment can be more systematized. Preparing light versions, executive summaries, infographics, and media releases for the press and decision-makers could also enhance the impact of the reports. The organization of press conferences and the use of symbolic dates such as World Press Freedom Day to ensure maximum impact in the media have proven to be useful. Field Offices should systematically compile a press review of the coverage received and prepare news items for the UNESCO website on relevant events and policy changes related to the MDI-reports. Social media should be used to promote awareness and discussion of a given MDI and each of its recommendations.

4) Develop a distribution strategy

The distribution of the assessment and its discussion at national level among all relevant stakeholders (policy makers, major media outlets, professional associations, civil society, embassies, etc.) should be systematized. When hard copies of the report are printed, the Organization should ensure their distribution at national and international level (to relevant organizations, journalism departments and donors). When the assessment is available in an online version, the same promotion must be guaranteed.

5) Use the MDI recommendations to design an Action Plan for the country

The findings of the MDI assessments should be used by UNESCO to help define priorities and strategic planning of CI's activities in the country. Greater synergies can be built between the MDI initiative and CI's work on assisting governments in media legislation reform. As it has been demonstrated throughout this paper, having a comprehensive and updated overview of the media-related needs is extremely useful for advocacy, project-designing and identification of partners.

6) Use the recommendations to measure development in the media sector

Periodic meetings with the different stakeholders to discuss developments in the media sector after the publication of the report is a follow-up activity that would permit UNESCO and the local media community to keep track of the media development efforts driven by the different actors and to identify areas in which more follow-up would be needed, in addition to encouraging coordination.

7) Use follow-up activities to create impact

The completion of the MDI assessment should not be seen as the end of the MDI process in the country. Follow-up activities are essential to generate attention and debate among stakeholders and policy makers on the results of the MDI assessments.

The field offices should keep the momentum around the MDIs going by carrying out a series of advocacy activities through targeted meetings with policy-makers and other stakeholders (such as representatives of the journalists union, the heads of journalism departments, the main local NGOs dealing with media, etc.) on specific recommendations of relevance to them. The integration of the MDI into journalism and media curriculum should be promoted vigorously.

Publicly held debates and conferences that relate to the MDI reports and recommendations are helpful to raise awareness. Aligning these with events and campaigns during days such as WPFD is also useful tool to raise awareness.

8) Use the assessments to promote fund-raising

As demonstrated in this report, the MDI recommendations have been used in many cases to convince the donors of the need to fund media development activities. Project documents that are developed on the basis of a needs assessment based on an internationally recognized diagnostic tool such as the MDIs are much likely to gain donor interest. Furthermore, the MDI assessment is a clear illustration of the UNESCO's commitment to analyzing the media challenges of a country, another aspect that can be very positive from a potential donor's perspective.

9) Identify new ways of resourcing the MDI initiative

New ways of resourcing the MDI initiative include exploring partnership opportunities with media development organizations and research institutions in terms of financial and human capacities, or combining the research capacities of several academic institutions as it has been achieved in Uruguay with the participation of the five universities offering programmes in Communication Studies.

10) Integrate the recommendations in UNDAF

UNESCO should work to ensure the presentation of MDI recommendations in periodic UNCT meetings and try to integrate them into UNDAF process in the country, when applicable. More could be done by UNESCO in using the reports to advocate for the inclusion of a component on media development. Bringing the MDI recommendations to the attention of the wider UN system present at national level could promote alliances locally with other organizations like UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, etc. These coalitions would be very useful for the beneficiary country and for the involved UN agencies, allowing for greater cooperation and synergies between the organizations, as well as the sharing of financial resources.

ANNEX – UNESCO personnel and experts who have provided information for this report

UNESCO

Mehdi Benchelah
Andrea Cairola
Guilherme Canela
Rosa Maria González
Ma'aly Hazzaz
Jessica Hjarrand
Ronald Kayanja
Michel Kenmoe
Ming Kuok Lim
Marius Lukosiunas
Saorla McCabe
Iskra Panevska
Jaco du Toit

Media development experts

Binod Bhattarai
João Brant
Steve Buckley
Ricardo Corredor
Hélène Delmas
Douglas Griffin
Emmanuel Mbede
Toby Mendel
Bechir Ouarda
 Zrinjka Peruško
Andrew Puddephatt
Helge Rønning
Eric Torrijo