



Applying UNESCO's Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSIs)

A Practical Guidebook to Assist Researchers

7/25/2013

An Initiative of the UNESCO International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) with the support of Global Partners and Associates Limited

UNESCO

Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development
Communication and Information Sector

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information>

7, Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France

Applying UNESCO's Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSIs)

A Practical Guidebook to Assist Researchers

Contents

1. Purpose of the JSI Practical Guidebook
2. Introduction to the JSIs
3. The JSIs in relation to UNESCO's Media Development Indicators (MDIs)
4. Structure of the JSIs
5. Methodological considerations when applying the JSIs
6. Guidelines on the presentation of the JSI national reports
7. Appendix: Toolkit for carrying out a survey within the framework of the JSI assessment (optional)

1. Purpose of the JSI Practical Guidebook

This publication is a Guidebook for anyone seeking to apply the UNESCO Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSIs) at the national level. It provides essential guidelines about how to go about implementing the JSIs in a given country, and how the findings can be utilised.

2. Introduction to the JSIs

The JSIs are developed within the context of the endorsement of the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* by the UN Chief Executives Board and the Plan's implementation strategy for 2013-2014. The purpose of the JSI indicators is to pinpoint significant matters that show, or impact upon, the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. They allow for a mapping of key features that can help assess the extent to which journalists are or are not able to carry out their work under safe conditions, and determine whether adequate follow-up is given to crimes committed against them – meaning that the perpetrators are identified and brought to justice. The JSIs serve to identify the actions that are taken by the various relevant stakeholders in promoting journalists' safety and fighting impunity at national level. These actors include the UN, State and political actors, civil society organizations and academics, and media and intermediaries.

The JSIs especially serve as a basis against which changes can be systematically registered over time. These changes will, hopefully, represent progress and will have a positive impact as regards the safety of journalists. As regards the United Nations, they can help UNESCO and other relevant UN agencies to assess on a periodic basis the extent to which the implementation of the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* has contributed to improving the security of media actors.

It should be noted that the indicators are not intended as a universal model, but rather as measuring a range of relevant aspects that serve the purpose of mapping and understanding. They are therefore descriptive and are for the purpose of analysis not prescription. Not every indicator is applicable in every context. However, any published findings should indicate any cases in which certain indicators have not been included (and explain whether this is for reasons of unsuitability, of absence of data or other causes).

3. The JSIs in relation to UNESCO's Media Development Indicators (MDIs)

The JSIs are related to UNESCO's Media Development Indicators, which were endorsed by the Intergovernmental Council of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) in 2008 as a unique diagnostic tool for evaluating media landscapes. They provide a more detailed elaboration of the general safety indicators as set out in the MDI framework, paras 3.13 and 3.14.

As such, the JSIs follow the same research system as the Media Development Indicators framework, building around three main elements: the indicators, the means of verification and the possible data sources.

The guidelines contained in this document refer to JSI assessments that are carried out independently of a full MDI study. They concern only the issues of safety and impunity. However, JSIs can also be applied within the context of a general MDI-based assessment of the national media landscape, should sufficient budgetary resources be available. When applying the MDIs in countries where the issues of safety and impunity represent important challenges, adding a chapter focusing in more detail on safety that is based upon using the JSIs may be particularly appropriate.

4. Structure of the JSI

The instrument has a number of specific indicators grouped under the various categories. The first category of indicators aims to provide a general overview of the state of the safety of journalists in the given country, while the subsequent categories

look at various relevant stakeholders: UN, State and political actors, CSOs and academics, and media and intermediaries – in regard to their roles and actions on journalism safety issues.

5. Methodological considerations when applying the JSIs

The methodological design of the JSI assessment exercise needs to accommodate three sometimes competing needs: to collect information that is reliable and responsive to the indicators and sub-indicators; to operate within actual cost and resource constraints; and to foster a wide sense of trust in the assessment among various national stakeholders.

Time frame

The timeframe foreseen for the application of the JSIs is two months of work by a fulltime expert, which may often be spread over four to six months or a bigger team. The timeframe also depends on the research methods selected (eg. if a detailed survey is carried out, it may take longer), on the number and variety of stakeholders involved in carrying out safety-related activities; and on complexities and contingencies.

Budget

Light JSI assessment:

It is estimated that a minimum budget of US\$ 7,000 is necessary for a basic application of the JSIs, although this figure can vary depending on the size of the country concerned, and the costs of local consultants. This budget should include the costs necessary to recruit a (preferably local) lead researcher (including assistants where needed) for the equivalent of two months of work full-time. As indicated above, this volume of work can however be organised with more personnel and/or over a longer period.

In-depth JSI assessment:

Additional funding would enable a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the indicators, using a more elaborate combination of research methods, including for example a survey among journalists, interviews with a greater number of relevant stakeholders and the organization of a national validation conference. Additional funds may also be needed for translation and publication costs. A JSI assessment process involving all of these elements could require a budget of up to US\$ 40,000.

*(See end of **Mixed research methods** section for further details)*

Programmatic Approach

JSI assessments are designed to be done within the context of the implementation of the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. This means they should be done with a view to contributing to a programmatic and collaborative approach to the safety of journalists within the country. JSI assessments can thus be used to help the country concerned to develop a national strategy on safety, and to guide the interventions of stakeholders active in the national space (government, UN, other IOs, CSOs, media, internet intermediaries, etc.) through providing information that helps actors to identify priorities.

Research team

It is recommended that the process be led by one national expert or organization specialized in journalists' safety issues. The personnel should be respected and independent, and have strong research capacity.

Multi-stakeholder approach

Regardless of who 'holds the pen', it is useful to involve a variety of stakeholders in the data collection process. This allows for wider ownership and enhances trust in the report and in its findings. It also brings in a greater range of expertise. It can be done by interviewing a wide range of stakeholders and relying on extensive documentary resources. Additionally, a more structured approach is to set up a formal advisory committee to provide guidance and feedback throughout the process. In this case, the collective membership of the body should be broadly representative of all interested stakeholders. The lead expert/organization carrying out the research can interact with the consultative group in different ways, for example by obtaining their feedback on drafts. Short of a committee, it can help to hold an early consultative meeting with key stakeholders to canvass them on how the research using the JSIs could be done with optimum results.

A large array of stakeholders is likely to be interested in the assessment process and should be involved in it in one way or another. This includes:

UN: UN Resident Coordinator, UNESCO Country Office Representative, UNESCO Advisor for Communication and Information or National Programme Officer, Country Representatives of other relevant UN agencies, funds or programmes or their focal points (where applicable) assigned to liaise on the UN Plan or media issues, UN Information Centre officials, UN bodies who work with journalists in one form or another and have an interest in their safety;

Other international intergovernmental or non-governmental agencies present in the country and active in, or that have a vested interest in, promoting journalists' safety issues;

State and political actors: government ministers and other officials, senior civil servants, members of parliament and relevant parliamentary committees, other elected officials, leaders of political parties, human rights commissions, ombudsmen, police forces, military, specialized institutions, public protectors, broadcast and telecom regulators;

Civil Society Organizations and academics: representatives of the local media, CSOs concerned with freedom of expression and all human rights areas; other civic bodies, bodies representing legal professionals; as well as organisations focusing on gender issues, rule of law or other relevant topics, academics from journalism education institutions, media trainers;

Media actors: journalists*, audio-visual recording staff and technicians, translators, fixers and all support personnel, editors, managers and owners, from all different types of media outlets: print, broadcast and online; commercial, public and community; heads of journalists' unions and professional bodies; self-regulatory bodies;

* Note: In the case of journalists, they should be ideally be representative of all areas of the country and there should be a good mix of:

- Male/female;
- Type of journalism (e.g. general journalism, photojournalism, investigative journalism, crime reporting, environmental, etc.);
- Fixed contract; freelance; citizen journalists (understood as social media producers who generate a significant amount of public interest journalism);
- A range in ages and level of experience.

Intermediaries: representatives of State telecom (usually fixed line provider), significant mobile network providers, significant IT and Internet Service Providers, other Internet actors as relevant.

It should always be kept in mind that a longer-term objective of the process includes building the capacities of local players to understand and assess safety issues as they relate to journalists, and this should be taken into account in designing the methodology.

Mixed research methods

Assessment will occur through two different kinds of tools: namely, analysis of pre-existing published materials; and new research-generated data from interactions with

human sources. This means that information can be drawn from multiple sources on each indicator, resulting in a rich set of findings.

The first tool draws in information collected through the review of published materials, including analysis of existing laws, policies and regulations concerning the safety of journalists. This tool provides knowledge of objective facts about the media landscape, such as the presence or absence of certain laws, or specific regulatory provisions. Researchers should look, among other things, at relevant legislation, reports by freedom of expression and media groups, and a range of other information (much of which is available online) such as news articles, published statements and alerts. Global reports by NGOs and IGOs may also be a useful resource since, while not usually focused specifically on the country being assessed, they can often nevertheless provide some reliable and verifiable national information, as well as enable a comparative perspective on progress in the country being assessed. For more details, please refer to the data sources and bibliography included in the JSIs.

The second tool consists of fresh information generated from interacting with stakeholders such as UN personnel, international organisations active in the country, local civil society groups, government and political personnel, media organisations, journalists and training organisations, etc. It involves engaging local actors who work in or have a privileged perspective on one or more of the dimensions covered by the safety indicators. Some of these may not wish to be cited, although it is preferable to identify sources. However, in cases of anonymity, it would be important to signal the status of the source (eg. "An official in the Interior ministry"). Any significant differences in evidence should not be averaged, but be reflected in terms of the diversity, when it comes to presenting findings in the narrative report.

To sum up, in using the two tools, the following elements can thus be combined to gather information for the JSI assessment:

- Extensive literature review of existing reports and data (this is likely to be qualitative research, although there may be quantitative dimensions such as statistics about: media coverage of safety issues; number of journalists killed; number of cases investigated; number of cases resolved; percentage of women amongst those killed/threatened or harassed; number of safety training courses carried out in the last year, etc.).
- Analysis of laws, regulations and policies in place (This is likely to be qualitative research).

- Consultations with the variety of stakeholders involved in journalists' safety issues at national level in the form of structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups or informal consultations. (This information is likely to be qualitative research, meaning that the data does not lend itself to statistical representation, but rather to extrapolation of insights or empirical observations).
- Data collection through surveys (see Appendix for details). If a survey is conducted, a research institute can be involved in order to ensure professional quality. (A survey does not necessarily have to aim at collecting information that can be aggregated into statistics, although - depending on sample size - it can often serve for valuable and valid quantitative purposes).

It is important to note that the information gathered using these various research methods (review of existing reports and publications, interviews and survey) should not be treated separately. Instead, what is needed to cover each indicator is to combine and compare the information gathered through these different research methods, ensuring triangulation in research.

For a light JSI assessment carried out with a limited budget, the emphasis in terms of the consultation process should be on focus groups rather than individual interviews, which are more costly and time-consuming. This is most likely to be viable for actors from the media and from civil society. The advantage of focus groups is that they enable the researcher(s) to gather feedback from a large number of stakeholders in a short period and at a reasonable cost. They can also enable the collection of different viewpoints, in that they do not need to yield group consensus. In some cases however, it is likely to be more viable to carry out individual interviews than trying to draw these stakeholders into focus groups. Examples of actors whom it is recommended to interview individually, even when limited budgetary resources are available, include government representatives and other political actors, UN staff and media intermediaries.

For an in-depth JSI assessment carried out with a comfortable budget, it is recommended to carry out more individual interviews with the various stakeholders. When preparing the interviews, it may be useful to develop different sets of questions for different stakeholders, based on the knowledge and expertise those stakeholders may be expected to hold. As more information is collected and both strong and weak areas of data collection - including areas where responses are divergent - become evident, the researcher(s) may wish to adjust the questions he/she puts to interviewees. This is different to a survey where, after a pilot phase, the questionnaire is generally kept standard for the remainder of the exercise. In particular, s/he may wish to focus more on areas where information collection remains weak, and where different

stakeholders provide different responses to the same question. Focus groups can also be useful here to bring together actors to discuss and provide input on specific issues for which it was not possible to gather sufficient or clear information through the interviewing process.

In both the case of light and in-depth assessments, preliminary desk-based research involving literature review and analysis of existing laws, policies and regulations, is a pre-requisite.

Combining qualitative and quantitative information

As indicated earlier, assessment against the indicators will involve gathering both quantitative and qualitative information.

For part of the quantitative data, indicators will need to be translated into appropriate questions to which figures can be assigned (e.g. on a scale of 1 to 5). In cases where there are diverging figures (eg. number of journalists killed over a given period), all documented cases should be cited.

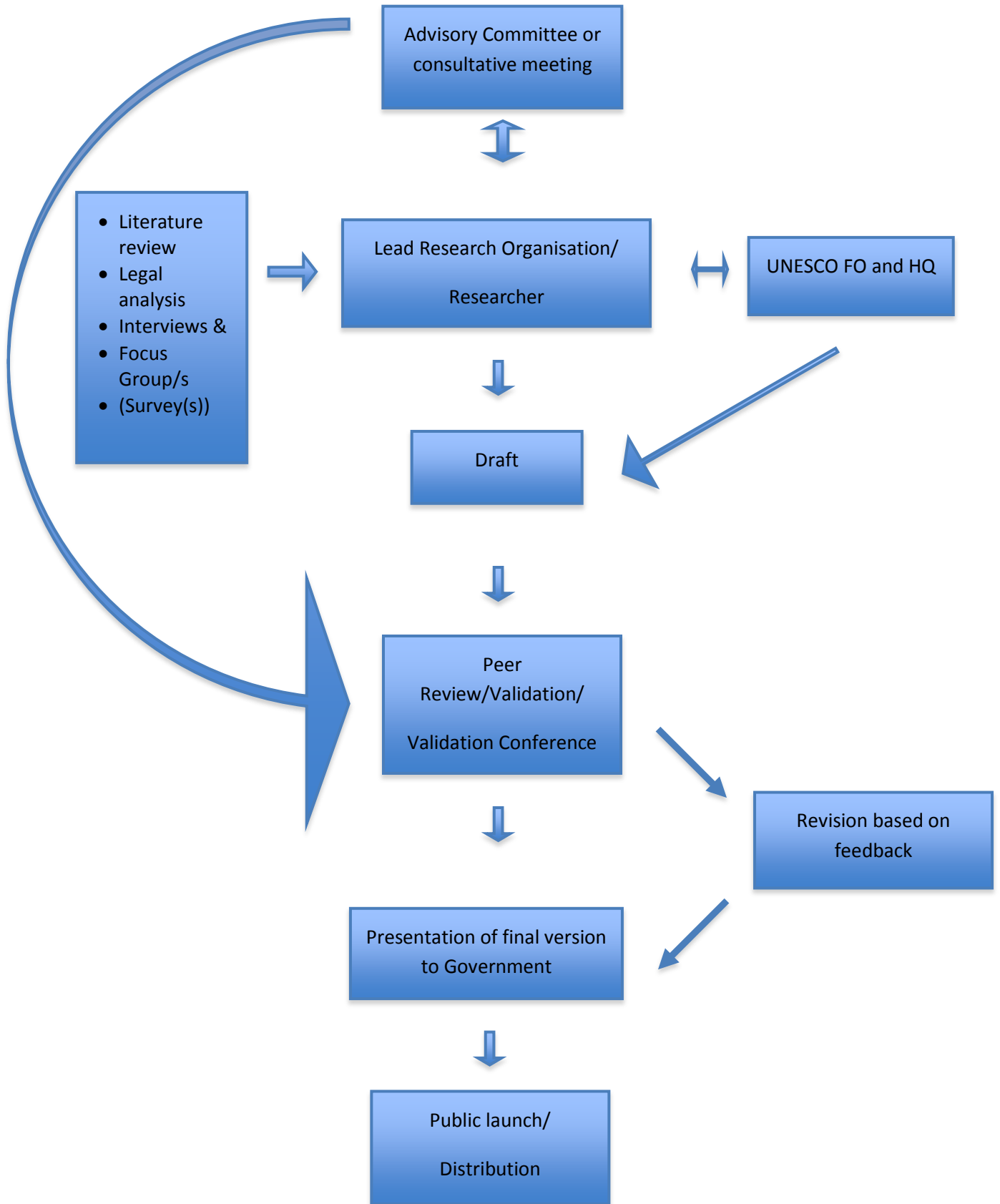
For the qualitative data, indicators will need questions that elicit information which may be factual or of a more speculative nature. This may come from published materials, from human sources, or from observation on the ground.

Where possible, the quantitative and qualitative data should be combined and analysed so that the findings can be written up at a level beyond that of individual items of information and rather as meanings that have a more representative significance. In some cases, this means aggregating quantitative data (averages and means, for example) and extrapolating from qualitative data such as case studies and anecdotes to signal more general points. However, the indicators should lead to evidence-based findings as far as possible, with any broader point being clearly substantiated rather than purely speculative or presumed.

Period to be covered in the report

The report should look at events, developments and activities that have taken place in the previous 12-month period only. Major safety-related events or activities that took place prior to that period can be mentioned briefly in the introduction.

Organization of an in-depth JSI assessment process



Advisory

It is not a perfect science applying these indicators, because the exercise involves (appropriately) selection and interpretation as fits the task and empirical context. In addition, related information is not all easily established in principle, and it is often not available even when it covers more straight-forward issues. For example, even indicators about the level of killings depend on who is defined as a journalist and whether the individual died as a consequence of his or her work. The JSI research should reflect the range of measures in regard to the given country. Subsequent applications (such as one year later) can indicate any changes and difference figures within each given measure.

Key indicators vs sub-indicators

The sub-indicators listed under each key indicator should be addressed to the extent possible as they represent the various aspects that need to be looked at to provide a full picture on the situation concerning each key indicator.

If there is no data available on a given indicator, this should be stated. Some indication of the situation can in most cases be provided by extrapolating from case studies and information collected in the interviews or other consultations, as mentioned above.

It is also recommended that researchers review the entire range of indicators before starting the assessment process in order to avoid repetitions and overlap between the indicators. It should be noted in particular that the same indicators appear several times throughout the document but concern in each case the activities of a different actor (UN, State and political actors, civil society organizations and academics, or media and intermediaries) with respect to this indicator.

Some indicators cover a particular aspect of the state of safety. Others cover the processes that impact on safety. In this second case, they generally designate activity outputs and outcomes (or the absence thereof), rather than very specific activities or longer-term results. In many cases, therefore, it will be up to the researcher/s to enter findings against a given indicator based on the presence (or absence) of particular underlying activities. These activities might be multilateral and bilateral meetings; support for, or efforts to influence, policy and legislative developments, advice on institutional design in the criminal justice chain; conferences and seminars; training and workshops; media development programmes and projects; innovative activities online and any other type of action that has a bearing on the safety indicator.

Disaggregating data and ensuring gender-sensitive approach

Researchers should keep in mind the value in many cases of disaggregating findings along significant lines, such as gender, national/local journalists, fixed contracts/freelance, ethnic

or religious minorities (when relevant). A gender-sensitive approach should also be adopted when selecting the researchers, interviewees and peer reviewers.

Peer review

In order to ensure the accuracy, quality and credibility of the assessment reports, and thus the legitimacy of the recommendations, peer review by one or ideally several experts (both national and international) is essential. These experts should combine expertise in media safety issues, in particular in relation to legal issues, with a good knowledge of the media situation in the country. Where UNESCO publishes the report as its work, this will normally be initially as a beta version, with a call for comments before a final report is issued.

Partnering with other organizations

When JSIs are done in partnership with other actors, such as UN agencies, or NGOs, it is important to develop clarity about mechanisms for final editorial authority and how each partner will be credited.

6. Guidelines on the presentation of the JSI national reports

Structure

The JSI national reports containing the information collected during the assessment process should be structured around the nine following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Summary of the findings
3. Legal, normative, policy and institutional obligations of the State (*this is contextual background*)
4. Overview of the situation of journalists' safety in the country (Category 1)
5. The roles and response of the UN system and other extra-national actors with presence within the country (Category 2)
6. The roles and response of the State and other political actors (Category 3)
7. The roles and response of CSOs and academia (Category 4)
8. The roles and response of media and intermediaries (Category 5)
9. Conclusion.

Sections 4 to 8 (covering the five categories of indicators) should be structured around the key indicators and sub-indicators, and these need to be clearly visible in the report. It should therefore be possible for a reader to refer to any indicator to get a snapshot of the situation regarding that indicator.

The JSI is not intended to produce recommendations. Rather, the results of any application should be available as one resource (amongst others) to stakeholders who are formulating strategies, and for tracking changes in baseline data over a period of time.

Style

The report should be written in an objective style without emotional adjectives or sweeping claims. Sentences should be clear and concise, and repetitions and vague formulations should be avoided. Statements that may be negative in regard to a particular stakeholder should always be substantiated, i.e. supported by arguments/statistics/examples and the sources of the information specified. The report should be sufficiently factual that diverse and even opposing stakeholders can agree on its contents, even if they have different views about who is responsible and what should be done.

Sources

All specific information, i.e. definitions of terms, statistics and quotations should be based on reliable sources and these sources should be cited properly (author, date of publication, title, publisher, and link, if possible) through appropriate referencing including footnotes and a bibliography.

Summary

A summary of the most important findings should be included at the beginning of the report.

Presentation to UNESCO's Publication Board

The publication proposal concerning the report must be submitted to UNESCO's Publication Board at least three months prior to publication.

Appendix - Toolkit for carrying out a survey within the framework of the JSI assessment (optional)

Sampling Strategy

The selection of respondents for the study can follow a purposive sampling strategy or a representative sampling strategy that is typical of statistical studies.

Representative surveys can be useful for studies of this kind. However, in conflict societies, practical constraints may prevent this. Further, there can often be another constraint as regards the level of resources available for the study. Limited time and budget may not allow for a fully representative study of all journalists, media outlets or support organisations working in the country. There may also be a lack of administrative data that would provide a sampling frame. For example, there may not be a reliable list of media outlets in the country or an accurate register of journalists.

There needs to be an alternative strategy, therefore, that provides a broad set of perspectives on the state of the safety of journalists in the particular media landscape. UNESCO in consultation with its local partners can help identify who the actual respondents will be. Purposive sampling therefore involves *deliberately selecting* respondents who have

a perspective you need to hear about, whereas representative sampling involves *randomly selecting* respondents of a particular type in a quantity that provides reasonable assurance that variation within measured variables within the sample will be very similar to variation in the population as a whole.

Steps when carrying out a survey

Whatever the sampling strategy you choose, the following steps should be followed when carrying out a survey. As noted previously, in some cases – particularly when a representative survey is being carried out - it may be advisable to outsource this task to a specialized institution.

- Step 1:** Target groups. There should be a separate questionnaire for each of the main target groups (for eg. journalists, training organisations, etc.)
- Step 2:** Sampling. XXX (lead local partner in consultation with UNESCO) will conduct sampling and will provide you with a list of individuals or organisations for each target group.
- Step 3:** Setting up interviews. Once you have received a list of organisations and individuals to approach, you should begin to contact prospective interviewees. Explain the background to the project: eg: This is a research project being conducted by UNESCO (and xxx jointly, if applicable) to assess the safety of journalism in XXX. The purpose of this survey is to XXX The questionnaires can be completed either through in person interviews or over the telephone or Skype so make sure whatever method you choose is convenient for the interviewee. If you are interviewing several employees from the same media organisation, it may be easiest to travel to the organisation and conduct interviews in one go. An alternative method for carrying out the survey is via email.
- Step 4:** Interviews. The survey questionnaire is designed to guide you through each question. Read out the question to your interviewee and then read out the answer options to them. Interviewees may change their answers during the course of an interview.
- Step 5:** Typing up interview findings. After a day of interviewing, you should type up responses in separate electronic copies of survey forms (in Word .doc or .docx format) as this is what you will be submitting. All multiple choice/fixed answers should be highlighted in yellow. And any qualitative answers should be typed up in the open space provided under each question.

Step 6: Submitting material. When you have completed your allotted interviews you should submit by email all electronic versions your survey forms in an electronic folder to [enter name of coordinating organisation] at [include email address]. You should also deliver all hardcopies of your survey forms to [enter name of coordinating organisation] at [include postal address].

Contact information:

Ms Saorla MCCABE
Assistant Programme Specialist
Communication and Information Sector (CI)
E-mail: s.mccabe(at)unesco.org
Tel: 33-1 45 68 42 62

Mr Ming-Kuok LIM
Assistant Programme Specialist
Communication and Information Sector (CI)
E-mail: mk.lim(at)unesco.org
Tel: 33-1 45 68 35 67