



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

CI-16/BUR.60/6
20 January 2016

Agenda item for discussion IPDC current priority areas and project assessment criteria

INFORMATION NOTE

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This document summarizes current IPDC priorities and project assessment criteria.

IPDC priority areas and project assessment criteria

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1. BACKGROUND

IPDC priorities and project assessment criteria have been revised and approved by the IPDC Council and Bureau over the years, with regard to the unique strengths of the programme and UNESCO's role in the media development landscape on the one hand, and contemporary dynamics in society on the other. The Programme's priorities and criteria are provided for information to project submitters prior to the formulation exercise and applied by the Secretariat in field offices and in HQ during the project submission cycle. Finally, priorities and criteria are used as a reference by Bureau Members in the final approval process.

2. DESCRIPTION

At its 59th meeting, the IPDC Bureau decided to:

- (i) Include as a priority to "Promote projects by independent media or media-related institutions that focus on journalism safety, or law reform fostering media independence, which also seek the active involvement and commitment of the State in the realization of the aims of the project"
- (ii) Discard the priority "Innovation in **convergence and integration of legacy (traditional) news media** and new communications", while generally encouraging innovative approaches within projects.
- (iii) Create a distinction between small projects (normal maximum of \$10 000) and larger projects (normal maximum of \$35 000).

(iv) Encourage project proposals that resonate globally, regionally, locally and involve several stakeholders, including state institutions, while preserving the media sector independence.

(v) Encourage the submission of projects that apply Media Development Indicators (MDIs), Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM) and/or the Journalists' Safety Indicators.

(vi) Encourage projects in areas of the Special Initiatives of excellence in journalism education and knowledge-driven media development.

(vii) Advise UNESCO field staff about these modifications of the priorities and the new project assessment considerations.

The Bureau also wished to elaborate on specific areas of safety and gave priority to projects in this field which seek to:

- Promote knowledge through the application of the IPDC Journalism Safety Indicators
- Counter hate speech in media and social media.
- Promote conflict-sensitive journalism practice, including in journalism schools.
- Promote cross-cultural and cross-religious dialogue among journalists.

In addition to these priorities, Bureau members were requested to take into account the following additional considerations:

- The need to spread the available funding as widely as possible (as is still meaningful), which translates into a maximum of one project being recommended per country (with a few exceptions, such as projects coming from LDCs) and per organization;
- The importance of projects on journalistic safety, for the reason that this subject synergizes with the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity which UNESCO co-ordinates;
- A point in favour is when an applicant is a proven and serious partner of IPDC.
- With some exceptions, a negative point is the high percentage of costs related to air travel and per diem of consultants and participants, particularly within the projects submitted by regional media organizations. Also projects which are mere shopping lists for equipment, with no proportionate training component, have been declined.

Other features that have enhanced the chances of project selection in the past are:

- Projects that dovetail with UNESCO expected results and benchmarks
- Projects which entail wider lessons or learning outcomes (incorporated in the project design), including strategic research that will contribute to knowledge development and dissemination around media development, such as the Media Development Indicators (or a relevant aspect thereof), the Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM) or the Journalists' Safety Indicators.
- Projects with potential impact at national or regional level.
- *Endogenous* media development efforts, i.e. projects of local media organizations rather than organizations that are not based in the country (except in the case of regional projects, in which case preference is given to media organizations based in the region).

Projects that IPDC does not normally support are:

- Projects which do not demonstrate gender-sensitivity as regards the ultimate beneficiaries (for instance, which fail to disaggregate how many men and how many women will benefit).
- Projects that do not demonstrably have editorial independence of owners or authorities.
- Projects where any support provided might give an undue advantage to the submitter over other competitive media organizations in the same location.
- Projects entailing the creation of stand-alone content websites, audio streaming, blogs, audio-visual archiving etc. (unless these are part of existing print or electronic media systems and serve to extend the media services of those organizations).
- Projects involving stand-alone seminars (unless they are an essential part of building sustainable

networks of media organizations and professionals).

- Specific audiovisual television productions/films and communication campaigns. IPDC does not support specific audiovisual television productions or films. Nor does it provide support to develop independent media production houses which are not a part of existing media organizations. IPDC does not consider support to subject-specific programme productions as a priority, since other UN agencies specialized in areas such as HIV/AIDS, agriculture, health, etc. can provide the necessary support; however IPDC does support projects to train journalists to acquire disciplinary knowledge in specific subject areas such as science journalism, media management, coverage of climate change, etc., since such projects are considered as contributing to the capacity building of media professionals.
- Conferences, unless they are clearly a programmatic part of a wider and ongoing initiative.
- Proposals that cover the institutional and maintenance costs of organizations.
- Support for the establishment costs of media NGOs.

In order to be eligible for IPDC support, project proposals need to be submitted by the following type of organizations:

- Projects are considered only if submitted by editorially-independent media organizations, professional associations of media workers, or institutions offering regular media development services.
- In the case of training projects, these should be based in organizations/institutions that offer regular, systematic and model courses for working and future journalists.
- As far as community media are concerned, community organizations and NGOs working in the community media sector, such as community radio, can submit proposals. The involvement and contribution of the community must be ensured from the inception of the community media project. IPDC will not support projects if such support gives an undue advantage to the submitter over other competitive media organizations in the same location.
- Individuals are not eligible to submit proposals.
- All submitting organizations should have a credible status, and preferably have a working relationship with UNESCO offices. All media NGOs that have no previous record of IPDC support are requested to fill the *UNESCO NGO Assessment Form* which can be obtained from the relevant UNESCO field office.
- IPDC does not normally encourage the submission of projects by non-media NGOs wishing to offer training courses to journalists as an ad-hoc activity. The eligibility of non-media organizations to receive IPDC support depends on the existence of credible evidence that the submitting organization can offer meaningful and high-quality training with the participation of working journalists from operational media institutions. Exceptions are made for NGOs working in the area of human rights and democracy that wish to obtain support to facilitate a dialogue between media, civil society, elected representatives and government officials, as long as the proposal can be interpreted as aligning with IPDC priorities, and the participation of the media sector can be assured. In these cases, IPDC Field Officer will verify the track record of the concerned NGO.
- In all the cases, it is necessary to assess the contribution of the beneficiary organization in order to assess the credibility of the commitment of the submitting organization. Beneficiary contributions should cover all the recurrent costs, regular staff salaries, project coordination and transaction costs. In short, applicants should not seek to cover their ongoing institutional costs in budgets. Whenever a project proponent requests overhead costs to be paid by IPDC, the capacity of the organization to implement the project is put into question.

3. DISCUSSION

The Bureau may wish to refresh itself on its current priorities and project assessment criteria when debating the approval of new project proposals for 2016. These priorities and criteria have been used by UNESCO field offices and IPDC Secretariat to prepare the current selection of projects to be considered. They were also made available to Bureau members during the on-line project review process.

4. CONCLUSION

The Bureau may wish to refresh itself on its current priority areas and project assessment criteria when discussing the approval of new projects in 2016.