IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Agenda item for discussion

UNESCO/IPDC's Media Development Indicators and their impact

SUMMARY CONTENT OF DOCUMENT

This document presents a brief update on the status of the IPDC Media Development Indicators Special Initiative as well as an executive summary of the study commissioned by the IPDC Secretariat in 2013 to assess the impact of the MDI assessments carried out to date.

UNESCO/IPDC's Media Development Indicators and their impact – Executive Summary
(February 7, 2014)

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1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Developed through an extensive consultation process and endorsed by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council in 2008, the UNESCO/IPDC Media Development Indicators (MDIs) are today recognized by major media development actors as an important tool for assessing the state of the media at national level.

The MDIs are firmly grounded in international legal standards and good practices. They cover all the main aspects of media development and are structured around 5 categories of indicators:
- ✓ The legal and regulatory framework governing media;
- ✓ The degree of plurality and diversity of the media;
- ✓ The capacity of media to function as a platform for democratic discourse;
- ✓ Professional capacities;
- ✓ Technical capacities.

Together, they provide an aspirational picture of the media ecology to be constructed in order to ensure media freedom, pluralism and independence as the foundations for media's optimum democratic performance. As such, they can assist both state and non-state actors working in the area of media development to target their interventions and guide the formulation of media-related policies.

2. APPLICATION

Since their endorsement, the MDIs have been applied in the countries below to identify media development priorities through nationally-driven assessments, usually carried out in partnership with a local media research institution or group of experts. The assessments are based on a combination of research methods, including desk-based research, analysis of laws and regulations, wide-ranging consultations, and in many cases a survey.

MDI-based assessments completed	On-going MDI-based assessments
Benin*	Bolivia
Bhutan	Brazil
Croatia	Colombia
East Timor	Côte d'Ivoire
Ecuador	Curacao
Egypt	Dominican Republic
Gabon	Iraq
Jordan (*partial assessment*)	Liberia
Maldives	Libya
Mozambique	Mongolia
Nepal	Myanmar
Somalia (*partial assessment*)	Palestine
Tunisia	Qatar*
	Regional project: Croatia, Serbia, FYR Macedonia*
	South Sudan
	Togo
	Uganda
	Uruguay

The assessments marked with an asterisk (*) were not carried out by UNESCO

At its 53rd meeting in 2009 and its 54th meeting in 2011, the IPDC Bureau approved a special allocation of US$ 100,000 (x2) for projects involving the application of the Media Development Indicators, with a maximum threshold of US$ 15,000 per country. The table below shows the projects which have benefitted from this funding modality to date:

Date	UNESCO Office	Country concerned by the MDI assessment	Allocation (in US$)
09/09/2009	Quito	Ecuador	15,000
25/05/2010	New Delhi	Bhutan	15,000
19/05/2011	Kathmandu	Nepal	15,000
12/07/2011	Bamako*	Mali	15,000
08/11/2011	Quito	Bolivia	15,000
21/09/2012	Ramallah	Palestine	15,000
22/01/2013	Juba	South Sudan	15,000
13/08/2013	Bangkok	Myanmar	15,000
26/09/2013	Kingston	Curaçao	2,500
25/11/2013	Tripoli	Libya	15,000
TOTAL			**137,500 US$**

* It has not been possible to complete this project.

3. IMPACT

Research conducted by the Secretariat during 2013 revealed following ways in which the MDIs have positively contributed to enhancing knowledge-driven media development.

Contribution to government policy is a significant impact of the MDIs, which provide governments with advice about media reform. For example, after the publication of the report in **Tunisia,** Decree-law 2011-116 established an independent broadcasting authority, HAICA, in line with one of the key recommendations of the report. Importantly, in January 2014 **Tunisia** adopted constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression and the right to information and a further article to restrict any limitations to these, consistent with another key recommendation of the MDI report. In **Bhutan** various changes were implemented post-MDI assessment, including amendments to the Media Law and a new regulatory system for broadcasting. The government also provided financial support to journalists to establish the Journalists Association of Bhutan following the MDI recommendation to "promote the establishment of associations of media professionals".

The MDI reports are an evidenced-based and non-partisan **advocacy tool** that serves as a resource within a multi-stakeholder policy-changing process. For example, in **Gabon**, the MDI study was useful for civil society stakeholders to argue for revising the Media Law to include an emphasis on the role of community media. The draft Media Law, elaborated by the Ministry of Communication and currently at the Presidency level, has now integrated community media for the first time.

The **comprehensive picture of the media landscape** provided by the assessments can be used to highlight the sector's capacity building needs and as a **guide** for programming and convincing donors on media development priorities. In **Mozambique**, the assessment has been quoted extensively in the project documents of international organizations.

The MDI assessments **enhance dialogue**. They open a process of collaboration between governments, NGOs, research institutions, local media and international organisations. In **Ecuador**, for example, the assessment bought together rival parties and created common ground in a polarized environment. Discussions produced a document that was validated and endorsed by all the major media actors of the country, including the government and private media.

Empowerment of stakeholders and **building of skills** is an important function of the MDI studies. This concerns the involvement of local researchers directly in conducting the assessments. They are generally empowered through training sessions to undertake high-level research, often in partnership with highly experienced international media experts. Media stakeholders more widely enhance their understanding and capacity through their participation in the various consultations, focus groups and validation conferences organized within the framework of the assessment process. These experiences enable them to acquire better knowledge of the full media ecology in which they work and how it compares with international standards.

The MDIs are useful in **supporting UNESCO's activities** in several ways. Firstly, the MDI reports help to guide UNESCO's strategic planning, promote knowledge-driven media development and improve the targeting of activities based on the needs expressed by the local partners, including through IPDC projects. In **Egypt and Tunisia** for example, UNESCO carried out a series of trainings for security forces on freedom of expression, as recommended in their respective MDI reports. Secondly, the MDIs reinforce UNESCO as an internationally recognized standard-setter in the media field and as a generator of knowledge and data on media. Finally, the MDI studies promote partnerships with both local and international organizations.

4. CONCLUSION

The scope of the MDI initiative is steadily increasing and the research carried out by the IPDC Secretariat has demonstrated a variety of ways in which the MDI reports have impacted on media development efforts in the countries

concerned. Follow-up activities are key to generate attention and debate among stakeholders and policy makers, and to maximize impact. The increased emphasis on follow up should therefore be maintained and appropriate resources allocated for this purpose.

5. BUREAU ACTION

The Bureau is invited to discuss this report, and encourage continued application of this instrument.