



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Strengthening IPDC's Media Development Indicators initiative

INFORMATION NOTE

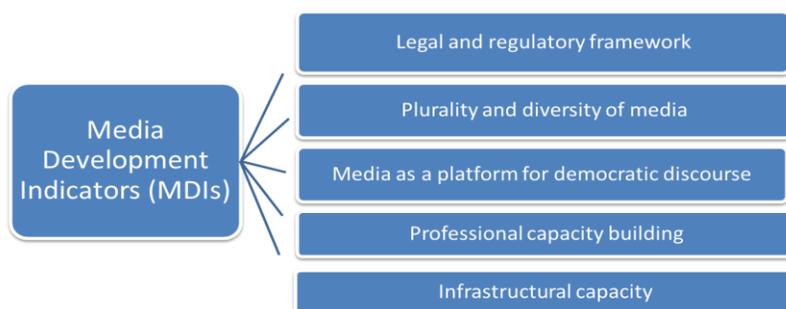
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This document is being presented to the 57th meeting of the IPDC Bureau in order to update the Bureau on IPDC's Media Development Indicators initiative and the Secretariat's related work. The Bureau may wish to consider reaffirming its support to the MDI initiative, as one of the key pillars of the IPDC's contributions to media development.

1. INTRODUCTION

UNESCO's constitution commits the Organization to promoting the free flow of ideas and information. To elaborate on what this means, [UNESCO's Media Development Indicators](#) (MDIs) were developed five years ago through a widespread consultation process involving experts, media practitioners, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and professional associations from all regions of the world. The result was an internationally-recognized framework for (self-) assessment of media development in any given country. The MDIs were endorsed in March 2008 by the 39-member Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC as an "important diagnostic tool for all stakeholders" to evaluate national media landscapes and determine areas in which intervention is most needed. They have since gained widespread recognition among major media development partners.

One of the MDIs' key features is that they are extremely comprehensive, covering all aspects of media development. They are structured around five categories of indicators, namely:



Taken as a whole, the MDIs provide an aspirational picture of the media ecology needed to ensure media freedom, pluralism and independence as the foundations for media's optimum democratic performance. As such, research done on the basis of this research tool helps both state and non-state actors to shape media development as part of the broader development within their country.

Since 2008, the MDIs have been applied in the following countries (through a combination of RP, IPDC and other extra-budgetary funding sources):

| MDI-based assessments completed | On-going MDI-based assessments |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Benin* | Bolivia |
| Bhutan | Brazil |
| Croatia | Egypt (<i>initial assessment completed</i>) |
| Ecuador | Iraq |
| East Timor | Nepal |
| Gabon | Palestine |
| Jordan | Qatar* |
| Maldives | Regional project: Croatia, Serbia, FYR Macedonia* |
| Mozambique | South Sudan |
| Tunisia | Uganda |
| | Uruguay |

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

In 2011-2012, the MDIs played an important role in supporting the democratic transition process in countries of the MENA region following the events of the Arab Spring.

2. STRENGTHENING THE MDI INITIATIVE

The IPDC Secretariat is working to further strengthen the MDI initiative, emphasizing the importance of:

- Assuring quality in the MDI applications; and
- Ensuring that the MDI research findings generate attention among stakeholders and policy makers, and assist in catalyzing responses to objectively-identified priorities in media development.

In order to achieve this strengthening, the IPDC is concentrating efforts on the following key areas:

1. Developing protocols to ensure quality in MDI assessments;
2. Placing greater emphasis on the follow-up of MDI assessments;
3. Promoting the visibility of the MDIs;
4. Revising and updating the MDI tool.

➔ In terms of **quality**, activities include:

- Ensuring excellence in the research through building media research capacities at national level supported by international expertise;
- Publication of a *Practical Guidebook to Assist Researchers in Applying the MDIs* (2012) available on the IPDC website;
- Reinforcing national ownership of the assessment process and multi-stakeholder involvement;
- Developing partnerships with other organizations to carry out joint MDI assessments in order to promote the use of the tool and secure much-needed additional funding and human resources (such partnerships have already been successfully tested with organizations such as the UNDP and IMS).

→ Regarding the **follow-up** of MDI assessments:

- In each country with an MDI, developing strategies for follow-up such as integration with UN Development Assistance Frameworks, advocacy meetings with key stakeholders, seminars with journalism schools, etc.
- Within the framework of IPDC, strengthening the link between the needs identified in the MDI national assessments and those which the projects submitted to the IPDC seek to address ;
- Developing best practices in using and sharing the findings of the assessments.

→ With regards to the **visibility** of the MDIs:

- Bolstering MDIs visibility in addition to the existing recognition from major media development actors, including UNDP, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, the International Federation of Journalists, the Media Foundation for West Africa, the Doha Centre for Media Freedom, International Media Support and academic conferences;
- Capitalising on all published MDI assessment reports now being part of a “UNESCO series”, with harmonized presentation and structure, and which are available on the MDI page¹ on the UNESCO website;
- Public launching of each MDI report and distribution at national level among all relevant stakeholders.

→ Concerning the **revision and updating** of the MDI tool.

- To maximize the relevance of the MDI tool and ensure that it is up-to-date with the latest developments in the field of media, initiate work to revise and update the MDI framework by developing additional sub-frameworks of indicators focusing on specific topics such as journalists safety, ICT and media convergence (including mobile media), social media and citizen journalism, gender and media, media sustainability, etc.

3. RESOURCES

- **Average cost of a full MDI assessment: US\$ 60,000-80,000**

- **Financial resources available:**

→ US\$ 8,000 Regular Programme budget for MDI activities for 2012-2013 biennium;

→ IPDC Special Allocation for MDI projects: At its 53rd and 55th meetings (in 2009 and 2011 respectively), the IPDC Bureau set aside US\$ 100,000 (on both occasions) to support projects aimed at applying the MDIs. These funds were for use outside of the formal project submission cycle, with a maximum allocation of US\$ 15,000 per project. This mechanism enabled MDI assessments to be carried out when needed (for eg. in cases where government is engaging in media law reform, or where a national media development strategy is being developed).

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/intergovernmental-programmes/ipdc/special-initiatives/media-development-indicators-mdis/>

The table below shows the projects which have benefited 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 |
| t.b.c. | Bangkok | Regional project South-East Asia | 15,000 |
| TOTAL | | | 120,000 US\$ |

* *It has not been possible to complete this project.*

The funds remaining on the Special Allocation for MDIs (\$ 80,000) will be very valuable for pressing cases of MDIs during 2013, given that the amount available from the RP budget has dramatically decreased – from US\$ 100,000 to US\$ 8,000 for the current biennium (2012-13). It may be desirable for the IPDC Bureau to consider renewing a special allocation at its 58th meeting in 2014.

➔ **IPDC Special Account:** The existence of the above-mentioned Special Allocation does not exclude the Bureau from supporting MDI-related projects that are submitted by actors outside UNESCO. While the average project allocation is not sufficient to finance a full assessment, a grant can go a long way when combined with other funding sources, or it can support targeted partial applications of the MDIs which focus on just one or two categories of indicators. These can be then built upon when further funding becomes available.

➤ **Human resources**

- One full-time staff member of the IPDC Secretariat, dedicating approx. 80% of her time to the coordination and quality assurance of the MDI initiative;
- Advisors for Communication and Information (ACIs) in the UNESCO Field Offices covering the countries in which the MDI assessments are being implemented;
- Leadership and guidance provided by Director, Division for Freedom of Expression and Media Development.

The recruitment of an Associate Expert is needed to help reinforce the MDI initiative and overcome the constraints caused by the limited human capacities available to support it. A programme of regular internships will also assist in editing and proofreading of the MDI reports.

4. CONCLUSION

The MDIs continue as a flagship of IPDC and UNESCO more broadly, representing normative leadership and standard-setting, as well as producing specific valuable research reports for national stakeholders. In this way, the MDIs are central to the broader momentum for knowledge-driven media development at the global and the national level.