

1. Identifying IPDC's niche in media development

A strategic framework for IPDC must be premised on its unique features. The 2018 External Evaluation linked these to the character and governance of the Programme as the only initiative in the UN system that systematically brings together Member States to promote media development.

The Evaluation found that: *“The unique potential of IPDC is its ability to combine several distinct features in a manner that generates a higher level of outcomes, and sometimes different types of outcomes, than would otherwise be possible. Endorsement by the IPDC Council of normative content, tools and instruments appreciably heightens their value to Member States, offering neutrality and impartiality; and also allows civil society actors, when supported by IPDC, to become active in more sensitive areas of media and communication and to collaborate more easily with governmental institutions. The specialist expertise of Council and Bureau members enhances the quality of work and reinforces the prospects of reaching meaningful consensus on important issues; and its positioning as a body within wider UNESCO facilitates intergovernmental approval on media development issues. IPDC also offers Member States a platform to influence intergovernmental agendas and support national trends and dynamics around communications development. UNESCO Field Offices are able to deploy IPDC interventions to support civil society initiatives in media and communication, addressing emerging and neglected issues and reinforcing reform in an efficient and targeted way.”*

The External Evaluation further stated that *“the evidence available shows convincingly that IPDC interventions have achieved significant outcomes in several key focus areas. Furthermore much of the impact, in several areas, is directly associated with features that are specific to IPDC and derive from its governance structures and instruments. Some of the most significant outcomes could not have been achieved by any other means”*.

Based on this, the Strategic Framework builds upon the unique features of IPDC, whose work revolves around two main complementary axes:

1. a **first axis** linked to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC which enables it to act as a think tank and standard-setting mechanism, developing tools to address current and emerging media development challenges;
2. a **second axis** focused on support to grassroots media development projects submitted and implemented by local media organizations and NGOs in developing countries, countries in transition, and/or in conflict or post-conflict situations, according to a bottom-up approach.

As such, the unique features of the IPDC include:

- **IPDC acts as an intergovernmental ‘Think-Tank’ and normative ‘standard-setter’**. IPDC’s capacity as a ‘Think-Tank’ – enabling innovative and expert thinking and proposals to emerge to address current issues – has been demonstrated for example in relation to the safety of journalists (e.g. IPDC’s Mechanism to Monitor and Report on the Safety of Journalists and its role in triggering the development of a UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity); or in supporting knowledge-based tools for sectoral development (eg. Media Development Indicators, Journalists Safety Indicators, Media Viability Indicators and Internet Universality Indicators). The IPDC has also pursued the link between SDGs, media development and access to information (through related work of monitoring of SDG indicators 16.10.1 and 16.10.2). Its role in building consensus and setting normative standards, non-binding but authoritative, in potentially sensitive areas derives directly from its intergovernmental status. Both think-tank and standard-setter roles are underpinned by the combination of media expertise and political sensitivity among its delegates in a forum dedicated to the development of media and communication with a strategic long-term horizon.

- **IPDC endorsement is valued as neutral.** Tools, instruments, projects and documents endorsed by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council, often with significant normative content, are regarded by governments and other stakeholders as authoritative, while being neutral, impartial and of high quality. Hence, they are more likely to be approved for implementation. This can enable multi-stakeholder cooperation, including government, in media sector reform and developing communication.

- **IPDC approval of normative guidelines and actions is procedurally efficient and produces quality outputs.** The IPDC Council and Bureau membership includes a high level of domain expertise in media, enabling delegates to directly develop and endorse relatively detailed normative frameworks with a high level of authority, and achieve a deeper consensus than might a purely diplomatic approach. IPDC procedures also allow it to progress from initiation to endorsement within a short period of time. Several experts and UNESCO staff maintain that proceeding through the IPDC route has resulted in more timely and substantive outputs than had decisions been sought directly at more generic governing bodies. It enables complex issues to first be processed and resolved by the IPDC governing bodies before being considered by UNESCO's governing bodies.

- **IPDC facilitates engagement with governments and wider civil society, with a grassroots approach.** The annual IPDC call for proposals allows UNESCO to engage with civil society actors and institutions and respond to their calls for support, based on the needs at the grassroots level and avoiding a top-down approach. The dimension of IPDC's work that involves support to grassroots media development projects is complementary to the standard-setting and normative role of the IPDC through its Council, as described in the points above.

- **IPDC project roll-out is streamlined nationally.** As a long-standing and recognized mechanism, entrusted by the General Conference, IPDC is able to consider and approve projects. These projects are brought to the Bureau's attention via the responsible UNESCO field offices and where appropriate in consultation with National Commissions. Quality control is further ensured by programme specialists at UNESCO Headquarters. Accordingly, once approved by the Bureau, projects move to implementation overseen by Field Offices and Headquarters. No national approval is required. Projects funded by IPDC therefore enable UNESCO Field Offices to get to work at national level with partners and on issues without lengthy approval processes from local authorities. This can be an effective contribution on behalf of the IPDC as a multilateral body in countries where media development may sometimes be taken as sensitive issue.

- **Experimental platform for emerging issues related to media development.** IPDC offers UNESCO Field Offices a regular, flexible and timely means to address emerging or neglected topics. Projects often provide assistance to countries on issues that, at a particular moment, may not be prioritized by other donors but yet are important. Post-conflict support, support for SIDS, and support to relocated/exiled media are examples. Despite the small scale of IPDC projects, the total often exceeds regular programme contributions, and in the absence of other extra-budgetary sources, is critical to sustaining Field Offices' meaningful engagement on media development and with related partners.

- **IPDC Council and Bureau activity engages and raises awareness of Member States.** Through direct engagement and discussion on the issue, representatives of Member States are more aware of and informed about the issues, and debate between them can enhance the potential for developing consensus. A potential benefit is that IPDC Council members may also, based on IPDC engagement, advocate on relevant issues at national level.

2. IPDC project priorities

In deciding what media development projects to fund, the IPDC Bureau has evolved priorities over the years, reflecting evolving media development needs and responding to emerging issues and challenges at a particular time. The enduring priorities of the Programme, as reflected inter alia in the decision of the 60th IPDC Bureau (2016), are the following:

Supporting media pluralism (particularly community media¹) and independence (improving self-regulation and professional standards)²;

Promoting the safety of journalists;

Countering hate speech in media and social media, promoting conflict-sensitive journalism practice and/or promoting cross-cultural/cross-religious dialogue among journalists;

Supporting law reform fostering media independence;

Conducting media assessments and research based on UNESCO's Media Development Indicators (MDIs), the Gender Sensitive Indicators for the Media (GSIM) or the Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSIs); and Media Viability Indicators (MVIs);

Capacity building for journalists and media managers, including improving journalism education (using updated and specialized syllabi that build upon UNESCO's Model Curricula for Journalism Education).

These priorities continue to be relevant to IPDC contributing to UNESCO's Strategic Objective 3 - *Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage* – and Outcome 6 - *Promote freedom of expression and the right to information*, as outlined in the [41 C/4](#) and [41 C/5](#).

They are also congruent with the 41 C/5 Output 6.CI3: "Member States and media institutions enabled to strengthen media development and media pluralism, including through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)".

The following section provides additional focus to IPDC's strategic framework.

3. Four Outputs for the Programme

In November 2020, the IPDC Council approved updated financial regulations for the IPDC Special Account, which were then presented to the Executive Board at its 211th session.

In accordance with these, the IPDC Programme operates with a Results Assessment Framework (RAF) aligned with the 41 C/5.

Based on the outcomes identified by the 2018 Evaluation as the most important achievements of the Programme in recent years, the RAF for the Programme focuses on the *type of output* to which programme interventions contribute, rather than the types of intervention (eg. Capacity building, research) which can apply to several outputs.

Based on this approach, the Programme focuses on four main outputs as described below. These four outputs in the RAF add more precision to IPDC's complementary action in relation to the broader action of the CI Sector. These outputs complement each other and together they contribute to the higher-level C/5 output 6.CI3, which in turn contributes to Outcome 6 and Strategic Objective 3, as described above (See Appendix 1).

The RAF also informs the Monitoring and Evaluation in the Programme, including indicators, baselines, sources and means of verification and targets (See Appendix 2).

Output N°1: Media development projects implemented by grassroots organizations to promote a safe, independent, and pluralistic press, including through capacity building, law reform, research and coalition building

¹ This includes attention to media ownership and concentration as part of media ownership diversity.

² This includes support to improve governance rules of media organisations as part of initiatives to encourage self-regulation.

Output N°2: Capacities of duty bearers reinforced to monitor and report on SDG 16.10.1 (safety of journalists) and SDG 16.10.2 (access to information) including through IPDC’s Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, and on Access to Information

Output N°3: IPDC acts as a laboratory of ideas on emerging media policy issues

Output N°4: Journalism education institutions empowered to offer high-quality journalism and gender-responsive³ training programmes using tools and resources produced by UNESCO/ IPDC.

RAF Output	Relevant project priorities
1. Media development projects implemented by grassroots organizations to promote a safe, independent, and pluralistic press, including through capacity building, law reform, research and coalition building	All 6 priorities, except journalism education.
2. Capacities of duty bearers reinforced to monitor and report on SDG 16.10.1 (safety of journalists) and SDG 16.10.2 (access to information) including through IPDC’s Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, and on Access to Information	Intersection with Project priority: Conducting media assessments and research based on UNESCO’s Media Development Indicators (MDIs), the Gender Sensitive Indicators for the Media (GSIM) or the Journalists’ Safety Indicators (JSIs); and Media Viability Indicators (MVIS) These projects will also contribute to RAF Output 1.
3. IPDC acts as a laboratory of ideas on emerging media policy issues	This normative role of IPDC governing bodies operates at a different level to the IPDC project priorities, but informs project selection and decisions by IPDC.
4. Journalism education institutions empowered to offer high quality journalism and gender responsive training programmes using tools and resources produced by UNESCO/IPDC	Intersects with: Capacity building for journalists and media managers, including improving journalism education (using UNESCO’s Model Curricula and its specialized handbooks for Journalism Education).

In terms of Output N°1 on media development projects implemented by grassroots organizations, consideration will also be given to those promoting community communication, combating hate speech, intolerance and discrimination in all its forms, as well as multilingualism in the media and especially in the digital field.

³ Gender-responsive means an approach that “identifies and acknowledges the existing differences and inequalities between women and men AND articulates policies and initiatives which address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of women and men”. See UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014 -2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227222/PDF/227222eng.pdf.multi> and Women Make the News 2019 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-pluralism-and-gender-equality/womenmakenews/2019/gendersensitiveresources>

Regarding Output N°2, on monitoring relevant SDG indicators, this activity includes mandated collection of data from Member States on safety of journalists and impunity, as well as mandated requests to Member States on access to information guarantees and implementation. The findings constitute regular presentations of reports to IPDC Council, and forms the basis of submissions to the UN Secretary General's report on global SDG progress.

For Output N°3, the role of IPDC as a laboratory of ideas aligns with the first axis of the distinctiveness of the Programme, as noted above. This role includes debates and exchanges and visibility on issues such as media viability in line with the Windhoek+30 Declaration on Information as a Public Good, media development challenges, especially those related to: safety of journalists, gender equality in and through the media online and offline, as well as on disinformation, hate speech, incitement to violence, harassment and toxicity in social networks, and the need to improve the transparency of Internet platforms and for public policies for multi-stakeholder regulation. National Commissions and the expert representatives of member states are amongst the stakeholders in this intellectual role of IPDC.

Concerning Output N°4, empowering journalism education institutions, IPDC will enhance actions in the implementation of capacity building projects and programs for journalists and media personnel. Contributing to education and professional training in journalism, especially in developing countries, supporting community media and bridging communication gaps will continue to be one of IPDC's priorities. Especially relevant to developing countries, and in particular SIDS, topics for training curricula will continue to include climate change, sustainable development, gender equality, intercultural dialogue, countering hate speech and the fight against violent extremism.

4. Rapid intervention mechanism for crisis situations

The IPDC, with its extrabudgetary funds and rapid decision-making mechanism for grant-making, upon consent of its Bureau members⁴ can play a unique role in support of communications needs in crisis situations in its spheres of competence, with a view to stimulating medium-term media development so that affected societies can not only recover more easily, but also use the momentum to build more resilient and emergency-ready media infrastructures.

The IPDC provides a vehicle and a decision-making system by the Bureau for allocating support, and soliciting more, for cases where a rapid intervention is needed. Additionally, IPDC can plan for follow-up that will more systematically build on a crisis intervention for strategic media development purposes.

Therefore, the New Strategic Framework retains the traditional operation of an IPDC flexible mechanism aiming at responding to crisis situations and that it reinforces it.

5. Global priorities: Africa and Gender Equality

Africa continues to be a UNESCO global priority for the 41 C/5 and has been a priority for the IPDC since its creation in 1980. Therefore, the IPDC will continue to focus its efforts on supporting media development in Africa. It will also seek to ensure the submission of high-quality projects from all regions, including by providing training sessions for UNESCO field offices and potential IPDC beneficiaries.

⁴ If the majority of Bureau members has no objections, funds are allocated through the appropriate funding channel.

In line with UNESCO's global priority Gender Equality, the IPDC has supported a variety of initiatives to empower women in the media sector.⁵ The IPDC has integrated changes in its project submission forms and implementation report templates to further enhance gender mainstreaming in all phases of the project cycle – from project design and planning to implementation and reporting. IPDC requires all of the projects it supports to be gender-sensitive⁶ and also encourages projects that are gender-transformative⁷, which support gender equality in and through the media.

UNESCO priority groups of SIDS and Youth are also to be taken account within IPDC's strategic approach. The agreed need for geographical balance of projects takes SIDS into account. The consideration of youth in media, and service to this constituency through media, will inform IPDC's evaluation of projects. IPDC actions will align with Youth 2030⁸, the UN system-wide strategy on youth, aiming to deliver with and for young people, and promoting their agency and rights in the communications development dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. This will entail considerations of youth in IPDC discussions, projects, internship opportunities, and engagement in media innovation.

6. Conclusion

This Strategic Framework shows the clearly formulated strategic outputs that IPDC works to achieve, as part of its contribution to the 41 C/5 and 41 C/4. The framework also helps to clarify for donors and outside partners, as well as within UNESCO, the different roles and unique features of IPDC vis-à-vis other components and actions of UNESCO's Communication & Information Sector and their associated funding mechanisms. Complementarity and linkages across the Communication & Information Sector will continue to be operationalised for effective overall programme delivery, particularly at the field level.

IPDC will promote collaboration with other UNESCO programmes as relevant, such as the Information for All Programme (IFAP), and others where collaboration is appropriate.

⁵ UNESCO defines gender equality as referring to “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys”, and as a situation where “Women and men enjoy the same status and have equal opportunity to realize their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results”. See UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014 -2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227222/PDF/227222eng.pdf.multi>

⁶ UNESCO defines gender sensitive as “acknowledging differences and inequalities between women and men as requiring attention”. See UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014 -2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227222/PDF/227222eng.pdf.multi>

⁷ Gender transformative is defined as referring to “actions and initiatives that challenge existing discriminatory policies and/or practices and carries out changes for the betterment of quality of life for all”. See UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014 -2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227222/PDF/227222eng.pdf.multi> and Women Make the News 2019 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-pluralism-and-gender-equality/womenmakenews/2019/gendersensitiveresources>

⁸ https://www.unyouth2030.com/files/ugd/b1d674_9f63445fc59a41b6bb50cbd4f800922b.pdf

Appendix 1 - IPDC Results Assessment Framework

OUTPUT 6.CI3 (41 C/5)

Member States and media institutions enabled to strengthen media development and media pluralism, including through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

<p>PI 1. Number of Member States that implement media development projects and support pluralism, including with World Radio Day; and number of media institutions that reinforce their independence and pluralism</p>	<p>PI 3. Number of journalism education institutions empowered through high-quality and gender responsive journalism training programmes</p>
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IPDC Results Assessment Framework

<p>IPDC Output N°1: Media development projects implemented by grassroots organizations to promote a safe, independent, and pluralistic press, including through capacity building, law reform, research, and coalition building</p>	<p>IPDC Output N°2: Capacities of duty bearers reinforced to monitor and report on SDG 16.10.1 (safety of journalists) and SDG 16.10.2 (access to information), through IPDC's Monitoring & Reporting Mechanism on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, and on Access to Information</p>	<p>IPDC Output N°3: IPDC acts as a laboratory of ideas on emerging media policy issues</p>	<p>IPDC Output N°4: Journalism education institutions empowered to offer high-quality journalism and gender responsive training programmes using tools and resources produced by UNESCO/ IPDC.</p>
<p>PI 1. Number of media development projects approved by the IPDC Bureau by region, gender sensitivity, and by funding modality</p>	<p>PI 1. Number of Member States reporting to UNESCO on Safety of Journalists</p>	<p>PI 1. Number of initiatives that address emerging media policy issues as set out in the Windhoek +30 Declaration, categorized by type: research, consultations, awareness-raising, training, advocacy, etc.</p>	<p>PI 1. Number of new handbooks and training materials, as developed by IPDC on key emerging issues for journalism and media</p>
<p>PI 2. Number of IPDC projects per thematic area: Supporting media pluralism, gender equality, independence and innovation</p> <p>Safety of journalists</p> <p>Countering hate-speech, promoting conflict-sensitive journalism, and cross-cultural dialogue</p> <p>Supporting law-reform</p> <p>Support UNESCO indicators assessments</p> <p>Access to information</p>	<p>PI 2. Number of Member States reporting to UNESCO on Access to Information</p>		<p>PI 2. Number of journalism education institutions that are sensitized to UNESCO's Journalism Education handbooks and training material, by region</p>

Appendix 2: Indicators for the 41/C5

Strategic Objective 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage

Outcome 6 – Promote freedom of expression and the right to information

Output 6.13 *Member States and media institutions enabled to strengthen media development and media pluralism, including through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)*

PI Target for 2023:

- Number of Member States that implement media development projects and support pluralism, including through World Radio Day (WRD); and number of media institutions that reinforce their independence and pluralism:
 - T1: 45 Member States (16 in Africa, 4 SIDS) (media development)
 - T2: 137 Member States each year (10 in Africa, 5 SIDS) (WRD)
 - T3: 35 media institutions (at least 6 in Africa, 1 SIDS)
- Number of Member States conducting national assessments based on UNESCO's indicator frameworks to inform associated policies:
- National assessments based on UNESCO's indicators frameworks launched or completed in 5 Member States (at least 2 in Africa and 1 in SIDS) Number of journalism education institutions empowered through high-quality and gender-responsive journalism training programmes

25 journalism education institutions empowered – (10 in Africa – 1 SIDS)