

Concept Note

(as of March 2010)

for the implementation of the
**Media Development Indicator (MDI) Assessment Initiative
in Bhutan**

1. Background

The Government of Bhutan, and specifically the Ministry of Information and Communication (MOIC), is moving forward to advance the development of the media sector. Towards this end, a partnership approach for the adaptation of the UNESCO Media Development Indicators (MDIs) to a Bhutanese context has been initiated by MoIC with the support of International Media Support (IMS), UNDP and UNESCO. The partnership approach will provide a locally owned framework for implementation and continuously evaluating media development in Bhutan.

The UNESCO Media Development Indicator Framework was endorsed by the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) in March 2008. It was the culmination of extensive research and expertise in bringing together a number of ongoing methodologies and schools of thoughts regarding media development. It is one of the most comprehensive frameworks for pursuing media development to date.

A partnership approach had been adopted for the preparation and implementation of the framework in Bhutan. The process would draw on the expertise and resources available amongst national Bhutanese and regional Asian and international media development actors.

Collaboration and local ownership are vital in the process, which is intended to enhance the potential impact, local capacity and improve sustainability for activities. Relevant international counterpart institutions and networks will be involved throughout the process of implementation. This inclusive approach will ensure that a diversity of interests is represented, and that the best national, regional and international expertise and practices available are factored into the progress of the media development framework for Bhutan.

2. Objective

An appropriate and inclusive mechanism established for continued assessment of the media sector that will adapt, the MDI framework developed by UNESCO/IPDC, to a Bhutanese context.

3. Principles and Process

The mechanism will be established and mandated to carry out an ongoing *assessment* and *development* of the MDI framework for Bhutan. It will be guided by two principles: *local ownership* and *transparent, inclusive consultation*.

The mechanism will have the following specific mandate:

- i)* *Assessment* and *development* for preparing a “living” document adapting the MDI framework into a Bhutanese context.
- ii)* *Capacity development* on skills and techniques for carrying out ongoing research, documentation and writing of a framework document.
- iii)* Continued *consultation* for involving all relevant national, regional and international stakeholders in the development and up-dating of the framework.

The process of implementation will follow a step-by-step approach for a Bhutanese team of researchers composed of a national lead researcher heading the implementation and a number of additional local researchers as required. While DoIM will manage and coordinate the implementation process, the working committee will oversee and provide input to the research team during the implementation process.

4. Role and Mandate of the MDI Partnership

Department of Information and Media (DoIM)

DoIM will lead and organize all aspects of MDI initiative with technical assistance from the international MDI partnership including from UNDP Bhutan where and when need be.

DoIM will administer the recruitment of the research team through a competitive bidding process. Once the applications from the bidding process are received a meeting with the MDI working committee where the various proposals are reviewed will be organised by DoIM.

DoIM will be the focal point for all aspects of the research and will be responsible keeping a document management system intact throughout the implementation.

DoIM will establish an online workspace as a website, a wiki-page or facebook site with a description of the initiative and a user friendly space where all documents in relation to the initiative as well as the draft MDI

report are uploaded and can be accessed. The site should have a function for the public to upload comments and reviews of the assessment reports. The site should also include a list of previous assessments or other relevant documents on media development in Bhutan.

DoIM will organise a national media symposium during the fourth quarter of 2010 where the draft MDI assessment report will be presented and discussed with a broad number of national stakeholders. The international MDI partnership as well as other MDI initiatives in Asia will participate.

DoIM will also host and organise a number of working committee meetings during the research implementation as follows:

- 1) First committee meeting will be to review the bidding proposals
- 2) Second committee meeting will review the research plan of the institution recruited to conduct the research
- 3) Third committee meeting will review the preliminary findings of the desk research for all 5 MDI categories
- 4) Fourth committee meeting will review the findings of the field research
- 5) Fifth committee meeting will review the draft assessment report as well the plans for the national media symposium
- 6) Sixth committee meeting will review and endorse the final MDI assessment report and strategic recommendations which incorporated inputs received at the national media symposium.

The MDI working committee

A working committee for the *Bhutan Media Indicator Framework* will be established to guide and oversee the implementation of the assessment.

The committee will be based on a multi-stakeholder approach and chaired by an official from the MoIC and ensure balanced and inclusive representation of all media stakeholders, including the private sector.

The committee will be constituted after consulting all relevant national stakeholders. A constituting meeting will be held shortly after the International scoping mission (September 13-19, 2009) has presented the objective of the Committee to all relevant stakeholders in Bhutan.

The committee will elaborate its mandate and ensure consensus from all stakeholders. Relevant international organizations will be consulted in fine-tuning the mandate.

Efforts will be made to align the work of the committee with the existing good governance working group chaired by the Secretary of the GNH commission as well as other existing committees within MoIC.

The committee will identify immediate and long-term capacity building needs among its members.

The committee will review the applications of the contractors bidding for the MDI assessment assignment and in consensus with DoIM appoint a research team that will be responsible for the assessment.

The MDI research team

The research team will be contracted under DoIM who will be accountable for reporting back to the working committee. The research team will consist of a national lead researcher and local researchers who will help out on the qualitative and quantitative parts of the assessment.

In ensuring consistency with ongoing international experiences, the research team will be assisted by international and regional media research expertise. An initial MDI workshop on the MDI indicators and the assessment methodology was conducted in Thimpu (3-4 March 2010) for the working committee, DoIM and local researchers.

The research team will be responsible for carrying out all aspect of the assessment and will report directly to DoIM during all phases of the research. DoIM will coordinate with the working committee and UNDP when questions in connection with the research arise.

The MDI implementation process

In brief the research will consist of ten steps:

- 1) Development of Bhutan MDI framework
- 2) Workshop on the MDI framework, assessment methodology and research plan
- 3) Recruitment and constitution of the MDI research team
- 4) Data and information collection within each of the five MDI categories
- 5) Community field research
- 6) Analysis of findings
- 7) Drafting of national MDI assessment report

- 8) National symposium on media development for feedback on draft assessment report and strategic recommendations
- 9) Final MDI assessment report
- 10) Bhutan MDI assessment report is disseminated and placed online

Each of these steps will be outlined/ discussed and finalised in the assessment methodology and during the MDI workshop.

5. Action Plan and Time Frame (see additional excel sheet 'proposed timeline').