

The Media Viability Indicators (MVIs)

POLITICS



The politics dimension refers to a country's **political and legal frameworks**, both national and local, that affect the news media sector. It also relates **to the extent news media are influenced and controlled** by the government, and whether this has an impact on their diversity of views.

1	Rule of Law Government actions are determined by laws that are fairly applied and enforced.
1.1	Government is based on the principle that citizens have the right of active participation in, and oversight of, the government.
1.2	The country has an independent judiciary that applies laws and judgments impartially to businesses and individuals.
2	Freedom of Expression The country has a strong legal framework supporting freedom of expression.
2.1	Laws establishing rights to free expression are enforced on all platforms.
2.2	Criminal and civil statutes and actions are not used to silence or intimidate journalists, news organizations, or citizens providing fair and accurate coverage and commentary.
2.3	Libel and slander laws are limited as much as possible and provide protection for journalists and citizens who have reported or spoken truthfully.
2.4	Licensing and visas are not used to control journalists or limit news media organizations' access to information.
3	Access to Information Citizens and journalists can access public information.
3.1	Government officials are available to provide information to news media organizations on a fair and equitable basis.
3.2	Governmental meetings, hearings, and press conferences are open to news media organizations and citizens on a fair and equitable basis.
3.3	Government documents and data are available to news media organizations and citizens on a fair and equitable basis.
3.4	There are laws allowing journalists to protect their sources.
4	Legal Equality Laws and regulations affecting news media organizations are comparable to those applied to other industries and are impartially enforced.
4.1	The general business environment (legal, regulatory, taxation) is supportive of private media enterprise.
4.2	Laws that limit concentration, monopolies, and cross-ownership of news media organizations are impartially enforced.
4.3	Government taxes and fees for news media organizations—such as broadcast license fees, newspaper registration, fees for establishing an ISP, taxes, etc.—are reasonable, comparable to those of other industries, and impartially applied.
4.4	Foreign investment or foreign donor support for private news media organizations is permitted under reasonable regulations and restrictions.
4.5	Copyright and intellectual property laws exist and are enforced, enabling news media organizations to profit from the original content and associated profits they create.

5	Media within Society Relations between government and news media organizations are mutually respectful and professional.
5.1	Governments and their agents respect the societal role of news media organizations, and the relations are professional even during times of high tension.
5.2	Government officials and politicians do not directly or indirectly threaten journalists as the result of their reporting.
5.3	Journalists do not frequently face physical threats and dangers as a result of their reporting.
5.4	Individuals or organizations that threaten or injure journalists face criminal prosecution and severe penalties.
5.5	Professional associations that advocate for journalists' rights and safety are allowed to operate.

ECONOMICS



The economic dimension relates to **economic** and **financial** aspects of the media market, news media organizations and their audiences.

6	National Economy The national economy is strong enough to make news media organizations financially viable.
6.1	The economy produces enough consumer goods to create a strong advertising market.
6.2	Household income levels are high enough to support a strong advertising market.
6.3	The majority of citizens can afford to buy news media products and services.
7	Financial Stability of News Media Organizations News media organizations are financially stable.
7.1	National news media organizations consistently break even or achieve profits/surpluses.
7.2	Local news media organizations consistently break even or achieve profits/surpluses.
7.3	News media organizations are able to develop diverse sources of revenue.
7.4	National news media organizations' share of the advertising market provides a dependable revenue stream.
7.5	Local news media organizations' share of the advertising market provides a dependable revenue stream.
7.6	Digital and online advertising are not controlled by third party digital platforms. News media organizations can generate revenue from their own digital and online content.
7.7	Ad fraud does not siphon off large portions of news media organizations' digital ad revenues.
7.8	The majority of non-PSB news media organizations operate without direct subsidies (from the government or donors).
8	Financial Independence of News Media Organizations News media organizations' sources of capital do not constrain their editorial independence.
8.1	News media organizations have access to the capital they need from credible institutional sources.
8.2	Subsidies for news media organizations are distributed in a fair and transparent manner that is determined by law.
8.3	Foreign organizations do not play a major role in supporting news media organizations, either financially or through content subsidies.
8.4	Government advertising is distributed among news media organizations in a fair and transparent manner that is not used to constrain editorial independence.
8.5	There is competition among advertising agencies in the market so that commercial advertising is not available to news media organizations only through a monopoly or near-monopoly distributor.
8.6	News media organizations that receive subsidies remain editorially independent from donors.
8.7	State-owned or funded news media organizations are protected from interference in editorial content by laws and independent governing bodies.
8.8	National news media organizations have enough diversity in advertising clients that editorial independence is not at risk.
8.9	Local news media organizations have enough diversity in advertising clients that editorial independence is not at risk.
8.10	News media organizations' use of revenue sources, including native advertising and other forms of paid content, is transparent and does not affect the independence of editorial content.


9	Competition Moderate competition among news media organizations exists, allowing for quality journalism.
9.1	Moderate economic competition exists among news media organizations.
9.2	Small and medium-sized news media organizations can survive.
9.3	Levels of market entry and exit of national news media organizations is relatively stable from year to year.
9.4	Levels of market entry and exit of local news media organizations is relatively stable from year to year.
10	Audience Demand Audience demand for quality journalism content supports a strong news media industry.
10.1	News media organizations' audiences are big enough to attract advertising.
10.2	Publicly funded news media organizations' audiences are big enough to justify continued public financing.
10.3	News media organizations' audiences are attractive to potential advertisers.
10.4	Audiences value quality journalism content enough to be willing to pay for it.

COMMUNITY

 The community dimension considers aspects related to the media outlet's audience, such as its capacities and values, as well as its relationships with media outlets themselves—its level of trust, emotional attachment, and participation.


11	Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Citizens are able to consume and evaluate the quality of news and information content across multiple platforms.
11.1	Citizen education across the nation fosters critical thinking of news media content and the forces that shape it.
11.2	Citizens across all population groups are able to evaluate information about sources and decide about the truth and validity of content.
12	Social Cohesion Society is generally cohesive and peaceful, with the majority of citizens sharing accepted political and social values across diverse ethnicities, political, and religious affiliations.
12.1	Most citizens have enough shared values to permit the peaceful political negotiation of policy and social issues.
12.2	The majority of citizens consume either news that impartially covers issues and reflects multiple perspectives, or multiple news media sources across different perspectives.
13	Trust and Credibility Citizens have a generally high level of confidence in the credibility of news media organizations and their content.
13.1	News media organizations are viewed as an ally of citizens in the effort to secure fair, equitable, and non-corrupt governments and corporations, as well as human rights.
13.2	Public trust in the accuracy and fairness of news media content is high.
13.3	The public's opinion of news media organizations and journalists is in line with, or slightly higher than, public opinion regarding government and other social institutions.
13.4	The public demonstrates loyalty to the news media organizations that serve them.
13.5	In confrontations with authorities, journalists and news media organizations can count on the public to support them over the authorities.

14	Participation Citizens contribute to the content produced and distributed by news media organizations.
14.1	News media organizations provide platforms where citizens can comment, discuss, correct, and elaborate on content.
14.2	News media content is shared and viewed by a majority of the population active on social media and sparks public debate (including social media trends picked up by news media outlets).
14.3	News media organizations are willing and able to collaborate with citizen journalists to expand newsgathering resources and diversity of perspectives.
14.4	Citizens contribute news and information to their communities or local news organizations.
15	Audience Data News media organizations have regular access to reliable data about audiences and their media uses.
15.1	News media organizations are able to access reliable audience data.
15.2	News media organizations have staff members skilled at analyzing and interpreting audience data and deriving actionable insights from it.

 TECHNOLOGY The technology dimension looks primarily at access to production and distribution resources and technologies, as well as news media organizations' expertise to optimize their use. Another crucial aspect in this dimension are citizens' digital rights.	
16	Access to Production and Distribution Resources News media organizations have access to the necessary production and distribution resources.
16.1	The physical resources needed to produce and distribute content are available and affordable (e.g., electricity, newsprint, production equipment, distribution systems, etc.)
16.2	News media organizations can access and afford the digital technologies required for digital news content production and distribution.
16.3	The infrastructure makes news content technologically accessible to citizens across the country on all major platforms, regardless of where the citizen lives.
16.4	Trustworthy digital payment systems are available.
17	News Media Organizations' Access to Technologies News media organizations' access to production and distribution technologies is fair and apolitical.
17.1	News media organizations' access to the physical equipment needed to produce news and information content is fair and apolitical.
17.2	Access to news media distribution channels is fair and apolitical (e.g., kiosks, transmitters, cable, Internet, mobile, etc.)
17.3	News media organizations have equitable and affordable access to digital distribution networks.
18	Audience Access to Technologies Citizens can access and afford the technologies over which news media content is distributed.
18.1	The price of receiver technologies is affordable for audiences so that a majority of people can access news media content and participate in communication (e.g., televisions, radios, computers, cell phones, print and delivery costs, etc.)
18.2	Network access and data rates for (mobile) Internet are affordable so that the majority of people can access digital news media content and participate in communication.

19	Digital Expertise News media organizations have the technological expertise to optimize their use of digital production, distribution, and management technologies.
19.1	News media organizations have the expertise available to install, optimize, maintain, and update the technological systems required for digital content production and distribution.
19.2	News media organizations and journalists have the capacity (skills, financial means, strategic networks) to circumvent censorship measures where online censorship, blocking, or filtering of journalistic content occurs.
19.3	News media organizations have the cyber security expertise to protect their organizations, audiences, and clients against cyberattacks (e.g., denial of service attacks, website spoofing, planting of false content into Content Management Systems, ad fraud, deep faking of content, data breaches, etc.).
19.4	Journalists have the expertise and technologies required to optimize content discovery and marketing.
20	Citizens' Digital Rights The government, news media organizations, and private companies respect citizens' digital rights, allowing them to communicate freely and safely online.
20.1	Government authorities or private companies do not interfere with digital communications in potentially threatening ways (e.g., Internet shutdowns, social media taxes, or license fees for bloggers).
20.2	Users enjoy privacy and data security, allowing them to communicate freely and without surveillance.

CONTENT AND EXPERTISE

 The content and expertise dimension focuses on the journalistic side of the endeavor, from media practitioners' expertise to the content they produce. This dimension also looks at the structure and ownership of news media organizations.

21	Quality Content Citizens have access to quality news media content.
21.1	Major news media organizations adhere to the standard of non-partisan reporting.
21.2	Citizens have access to national and international news media content that meets international standards for quality news media content.
21.3	Citizens have access to local news media content that meets international standards for quality news media content.
21.4	Citizens have timely access to information about important events.
21.5	Citizens have access to accurate information about minority and marginalized groups in society that reflects the perspectives of those groups.
21.6	Citizens have access to news media in different languages, including minority languages.
21.7	Citizens have access to news media content from multiple local, regional, national, and international sources.
21.8	Native advertising and other forms of paid content are clearly indicated as such.
22	Journalism Expertise News media organizations have the necessary structures as well as professionally educated and trained journalists to produce high quality content that meets international standards.
22.1	News media organizations pay journalists high enough wages to attract and retain qualified journalists.
22.2	News media organizations pay journalists high enough wages to discourage journalistically unethical behavior.
22.3	There are professional journalism education and training programs available to supply the needs of news media organizations and communities.
22.4	The number of journalists in each national news media industry sector is relatively stable over time.
22.5	The number of journalists in each local news media industry sector is relatively stable over time.

23	Ownership of news media organizations Ownership of news media organizations is transparent and does not prevent diversity of perspectives or quality content.
23.1	News media ownership is not concentrated in the hands of the state or a few companies or families.
23.2	The nature and structure of news media ownership is transparent.
23.3	News media owners are not tied to government or other powerful interests.
23.4	News media owners generally respect the editorial independence of their staff, refraining from interfering in content due to personal or corporate interests or views.
24	Business Structure News media organizations have the structures to be viable.
24.1	News media organizations are governed with the business, financial, and managerial ability to effectively oversee their strategies and operations.
24.2	News media organizations are committed to the production of quality content.
24.3	News media organizations have sound business and finance plans that employees are familiar with and able to implement.
24.4	News media organizations have an organizational entity (department or person) that dedicates most of its working time to the generation of revenue.
24.5	News media organizations have written documents that specify and standardize the general terms and conditions under which advertising and other services used to gain revenue are provided (including price lists, contracts, etc.).
24.6	News media organizations have rules or procedures to separate editorial and advertising functions to maintain editorial independence from business pressures.
24.7	News media organizations have established strategic networks to share content, expertise, and other resources.
24.8	News media organizations have established mutual aid arrangements to support viability in the event of natural disaster or authoritarian suppression.
25	Business Expertise News media organizations have the personnel and expertise to be strategically and financially viable.
25.1	News media organizations are able to hire staff, including women and marginalized groups, with management knowledge and skills (finance, marketing, sales, etc.).
25.2	The employees in advertising and sales, including women and marginalized groups, have received vocational or academic training.
25.3	News media organizations are able to hire staff, including women and marginalized groups, with the technical knowledge and skills to keep the organization current with digital and technological change.
25.4	News media organizations have the expertise to monetize content across multiple platforms.
25.5	News media organizations have the expertise to enable the organization and its journalists to innovate content and processes.

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The Media Viability Indicators were developed by Prof. Ann Hollifield, Dr. Laura Moore and Gerwin De Roy. For more information on DW Akademie's work on media viability, please contact Nadine Jurrat: nadine.jurrat@dw.com

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