



AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER

**The first home grown analysis of the
media landscape in Africa**



GHANA 2011

Published by:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)
fesmedia Africa
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264 (0)61 237438
E-mail: info@fesmedia.org
www.fesmedia.org

© Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

ISBN

No. 978-99916-873-7-7

FREE COPY

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this volume do not necessarily reflect the views of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung or *fesmedia Africa*. *fesmedia Africa* does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work.

MAGAZINES DEGREE DOCUMENTS DEGREE DOCU- REPORT

CONTENT

EFFI- TION TRUTH POINT ACCESS BOOKS BOOKS

SECTOR 1: 9

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted.

SECTOR 2: 21

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

SECTOR 3: 33

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

SECTOR 4: 45

The media practise high levels of professional standards.

The African Media Barometer (AMB)






The African Media Barometer (AMB) is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. Unlike other press surveys or media indices the AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on home-grown criteria derived from African Protocols and Declarations like the “*Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa*” (2002) by the “African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights”. The instrument was jointly developed by *fesmedia Africa*, the Media Project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Africa, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2004.

The African Media Barometer is an analytical exercise to measure the media situation in a given country which at the same time serves as a practical lobbying tool for media reform. Its results are presented to the public of the respective country to push for an improvement of the media situation using the AU Declaration and other African standards as benchmarks. The recommendations of the AMB-reports are then integrated into the work of the 19 country offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in sub-Saharan Africa and into the advocacy efforts of other local media organizations like the Media Institute of Southern Africa.

Methodology and Scoring System

Every two to three years a panel of 10-12 experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. For 1 1/2 days they discuss the national media environment according to 45 predetermined indicators. The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who also edits the AMB-report.

After the discussion of one indicator panel members allocate their individual scores to that respective indicator in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

1	Country does not meet indicator	
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator	
3	Country meets some aspects of indicator	
4	Country meets most aspects of indicator	
5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator	

The sum of all individual indicator scores will be divided by the number of panel members to determine the average score for each indicator. These average indicator scores are added up to form average sector scores which then make up the overall country score.

Outcome

The final, qualitative report summarizes the general content of the discussion and provides the average score for each indicator plus sector scores and overall country score. In the report panellists are not quoted by name to protect them from possible repercussions. Over time the bi- or tri-annual reports are measuring the media development in that particular country and should form the basis for a political discussion on media reform.

In countries where English is not the official language the report is published in a bilingual edition.

Implementing the African Media Barometer the offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and - in SADC countries the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) - only serve as a convener of the panel and as guarantor of the methodology. The content of the discussion and the report is owned by the panel of local experts and does not represent or reflect the view of FES or MISA.

At the end of 2008 the indicators were reviewed, amended and some new ones were added to address the rapid developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT).

By the end of 2011 the African Media Barometer has been held in 28 African countries, in some of them already for the fourth time.

Mareike Le Pelley
Head of fesmedia Africa
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Windhoek, Namibia

Zoe Titus
Acting Director
Media Institute of Southern
Africa (MISA)
Windhoek, Namibia



See above 28 AMB Countries (2005-2011)

AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER GHANA 2011

Summary

Ghana, the first African country to gain independence from its colonial masters in 1957, is often seen as a model for political and economic reform in Africa. Current President John Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress was elected in December 2008, winning by a very narrow margin over the candidate of the then governing New Patriotic Party. The change of government was peaceful – another sign of the maturing of democracy in Ghana after a series of coups and authoritarian rule in the later part of the 20th century.

The “days of the culture of silence” which had prevailed in the country of 24 million people up until 2001 are over. Public discussions and debates are very robust, although the traditionally “authoritarian upbringing” of most people often makes it difficult or even impossible to speak out to, let alone against elders. Freedom of expression is also still inhibited by economic considerations which weigh quite heavily in a country where many young people are unemployed and looking for favours from political elites.

With media pluralism and a diverse media landscape there are now more platforms for citizens and journalists to express themselves. Radio is the medium of choice for most Ghanaians, reaching more than 90 per cent of the country. The state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) runs two national radio stations as well as one station in each of the nine regions. They compete for listeners with more than 200 non-state radio stations, around 180 of them commercial and 20 community-owned. In addition to one television channel run by GBC there are ten commercial TV stations. Most commercial media are mere business-driven enterprises with the main objective to make money by advertisers delivering large audiences to advertisers. This has resulted in a trend towards sensationalism. There is also quite a range of print media on the market, but at a cost of half the daily wage of formal workers per copy they are practically unaffordable for ordinary people.

The state-owned media, among them the GBC and two major dailies, are “insulated” from government control via the National Media Commission (NMC) established by the 1992 Constitution. The NMC is made up of ten representatives from civil society organisations and five members nominated by parliament and the president respectively. The commission’s main task is to appoint the boards of state-owned media. The appointments are made on the basis of nominations solicited from organisations represented on the NMC. Because the scope of groups involved in the process is limited, there are doubts, especially in regard to

the GBC board, whether this procedure can be expected to produce boards really representative of society at large.

The output of GBC television news indicates that many editors are still conditioned by the experience of the past, which demanded self-censorship if one wanted to avoid punitive measures, and continue to toe the “line of officialdom”. GTV’s news bulletins usually follow the hierarchy of government institutions. Government activities on average take up 70 per cent of news items, with the rest dedicated to the opposition and other organisations in society. GBC Radio news take a more journalistic approach, having more regard to newsworthiness.

The (GBC) has a code of professional standards in place and adherence to these guidelines is rated as very good. The Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) also has its own code of ethics. In cases of serious breaches, the offending radio station can be expelled from the association – quite a severe sanction as GIBA offers a range of business opportunities which are vital for its members. Unfortunately not all radio stations are members of GIBA and those who opted to stay outside cannot be called to order by the association. The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) has a code of professional ethics but many journalists, mainly those who did not have any formal professional training, do not know about the existence of the code. About half of the print media, mainly the small papers, operate without any recourse to this or any other code.

The statutory National Media Commission has also developed guidelines for broadcasting and print media and has the mandate to maintain “highest ... journalistic standards”, but it is seen as “toothless”. The self-regulatory mechanisms – with all their flaws – are working more efficiently because they serve as “courts of honour” and their “name-and-shame” sanctions seem to be the strongest weapon against unethical practices.

The major print media, both state-owned and private, try to follow the principles of accuracy and fairness. However, the standard of radio journalism, particularly in commercial stations, is of great concern. On-air discussions are habitually unprofessional. Politicians usually trade insults and unsubstantiated allegations and talk shows are turned into political platforms for the two main political parties NDC and NPP only, neglecting other stakeholders in civil society who are affected by the issues debated.

Radio and television stations are licensed by the National Communications Authority (NCA). The NCA operates under the Ministry of Communications and Technology and its members are appointed at the discretion of the President. Although the NCA has to consult the NMC in regard to regulation and monitoring broadcasting services, it plays only a minor role in this regard. A Broadcasting Bill aiming to establish an independent broadcasting regulator has been stalled for the last ten years, as have any attempts to transform the GBC into a truly public broadcasting service.

The same fate has been suffered by a Right to Information Bill, on the table since 2003, which seeks to give effect to the constitutional right to access to information held by the state. The Bill is criticised as falling short of the standards set by international documents and best practice. The draft seems to be under reconsideration at present as one of the committees set up by a commission tasked with the review of the constitution focuses on access to information and other related issues.

While the process seems painstakingly slow, civil society organisations and media lobby groups do play a pivotal and influential role in regard to media reforms. They have been strongly supporting and pushing for freedom of the media and expression and government by and large shows respect for their contributions.



SECTOR 1:

**Freedom of expression, including
freedom of the media, is effectively
protected and promoted.**

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted.

1.1 Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is guaranteed in the constitution and supported by other pieces of legislation.

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana says in its article 21 (1) (a):

All persons shall have the right to freedom of expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media.

The constitution also contains a special chapter on “Freedom and Independence of the Media”. Article 162 (1) stipulates unequivocally that “freedom and independence of the media are hereby guaranteed” and article 162 (5) expressly acknowledges the media’s role as a watchdog over state authorities:

All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, ... uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana.

There are, however, provisions for limitations on freedom of expression generally. Article 21 (4) (e) allows such restrictions if they are

... reasonably required for the purpose of safe-guarding the people of Ghana against the teaching or propagation of a doctrine which exhibits or encourages disrespect for the nationhood of Ghana, the national symbols and emblems, or incites hatred against other members of the community...

The latter limitation is said to be necessary because – as one panelist put it – “inciting ethnic issues could bring us to the brink of civil war”.

Article 164 says that the freedom and independence of the media

... are subject to laws that are reasonably required in the interest of national security, public order, public morality and for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons.

While article 165 adds that this and other provisions under this chapter “shall not be taken to limit the enjoyment of any of the fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed under ... this constitution”, there is some concern that “anybody could operationalise these limitations. If the executive wants it, they

could restrict freedom of expression and use laws hidden in the statute books”.

The constitution provides for the establishment of a National Media Commission (NMC) with the mandate to “promote and ensure the freedom and independence of the media for mass-communication or information” (article 167). The commission’s main tasks are to “ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media” and to “insulate the state-owned media from government control”. The NMC is mandated to deal with complaints from the public against the media and to appoint the board members of state-owned media. It is, however, not allowed to “exercise any control or direction over the professional functions of a person engaged in the production of newspapers or other means of communication” (article 173). (More details under indicators 2.4 referring to state-owned print media, 3.4 referring to the national broadcaster, and 4.1 referring to self-regulation of the media.)

“If the executive wants it, they could... use laws hidden in the statute books”

According to article 166 of the constitution the NMC consists of fifteen members:

- (a) one representative each nominated by
 - (i) the Ghana Bar Association;
 - (ii) the Publishers and Owners of the Private Press;
 - (iii) the Ghana Association of Writers and the Ghana Library Association;
 - (iv) the Christian group (the National Catholic Secretariat, the Christian Council, and the Ghana Pentecostal Council)
 - (v) the Federation of Muslim Councils and Ahmadiyya Mission;
 - (vi) the training institutions of journalists and communicators;
 - (vii) the Ghana Advertising Association and the Institute of Public Relations of Ghana; and
 - (viii) the Ghana National Association of Teachers;
- (b) two representatives nominated by the Ghana Journalists Association;
- (c) two persons appointed by the President; and
- (d) three persons nominated by Parliament.

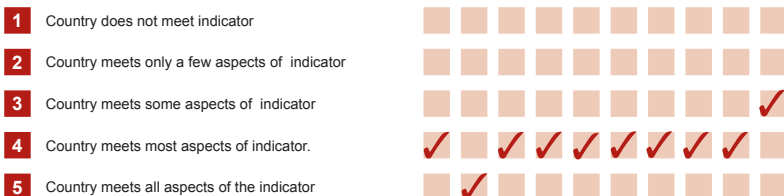
Representatives from organisational clusters are appointed for three years on a rotational basis. Their terms are independent from those of governments making sure that members are not replaced whenever the ruling party changes.

In spite of some reservations expressed by some of the panelists regarding the structure and level of openness for selection of members, there was consensus that by and large the system is working. The fact that the President appoints two members of the NMC, however, might affect freedom of expression particularly in the state-owned media which may be cajoled or cowed into playing to the tunes called by the political party in power.

Overall, however, panelists were unanimous that the Ghanaian media enjoy freedom to operate and perform their responsibilities.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.0 (2008: 4.5; 2006: 4.2)

1.2 The right to freedom of expression is practised and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear.

Panelists differed in their assessment of how wide the space for freedom of expression actually is.

Some said that this right does not mean freedom to say anything anyhow, pointing out that there are practices that guide communication even in people's homes and that these should also be applied in the public sphere. They argued that the fear factor is negligible in spite of a few arrests and incidents of a clamp down on demonstrators, where people had overstepped certain boundaries.

Others argued that the extent of the right to freedom of expression depends on what is being said and to whom and that statements must be "politically correct to avoid a pick up by the security forces". Those who are able to express themselves freely seem to be those who have some political backing and those without any such backing are generally careful with their utterances: "If I am alone, that is where the fear comes in".

Freedom of expression is usually inhibited by economic considerations and people may be given 'friendly warnings'. The economic factor has considerable weight in a country where many young people are unemployed and looking for favours from political elites. For fear of political clashes, or for missing out on political and economic favours, individuals may decide to be circumspect in their expression rather than fearing any actual restrictions imposed by law. Such individuals may

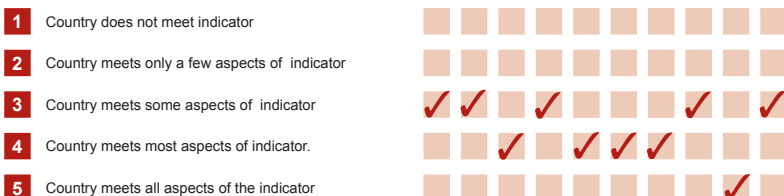
be careful with their utterances and speak in a managed tone so as not to incur the displeasure of any political elite.

Culture also plays a big role in daily expressions which are guided largely by politeness and sensitivity, personal values and interpersonal relations. Most people have an “authoritarian upbringing” which, for example, makes it difficult or even impossible to talk to elders.

In spite of these limitations the “days of the culture of silence” (under Jerry Rawlings, military dictator in 1979 and from 1981 to 1992, then elected president from 1993 to 2001) are over. Public discussions and debates are very robust. With a diverse media landscape and media pluralism there are now more platforms for citizens and journalists to express themselves.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.6 (2008: 4.8; 2006: 3.3)

1.3 There are no laws restricting freedom of expression such as excessive official secret or libel acts, or laws that unreasonably interfere with the responsibilities of media.

Since 2001, when the relevant section in the Criminal Code of 1960 was repealed, Ghana no longer has a provision on criminal defamation on the statute books. But there is still the threat of being charged with civil defamation which could carry heavy fines. In reality, however, such cases “somehow go away”.

Still in force is section 208 of the Criminal Code (1960) which criminalises the publication of

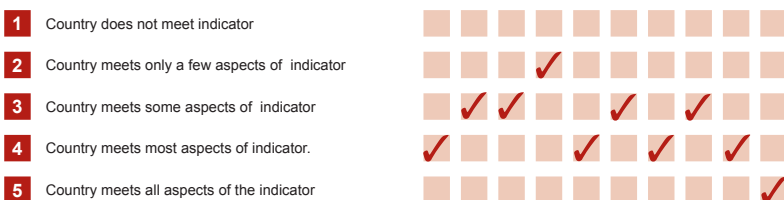
... any statement, rumour or report which is likely to cause fear and alarm to the public or to disturb public peace, knowing or having reason to believe that the statement, rumour or report is false.

Panelists disagreed on whether this provision allows room for interference with the media. Some argued that it exists more or less on paper only while others held that it should be taken seriously as a real threat. Indeed, this provision has been used in a few cases to arrest opposition party activists. Furthermore, state security agencies are alleged to be increasingly interfering directly with media over what can be published or not, supposedly in the interest of national security.

The Public Order Act stipulates that demonstrations must be announced to the police five days before the event. Approval is given at the discretion of the police.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.4 (2008: 3.8; 2006: 4.2)

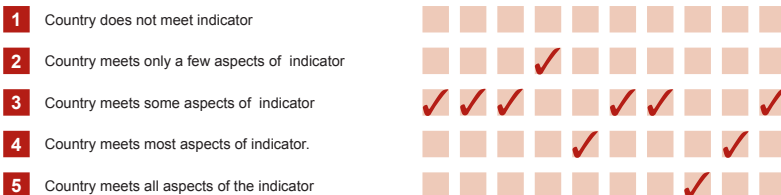
1.4 Government makes every effort to honour regional and international instruments on freedom of expression and the media.

Existing international and regional instruments on freedom of expression were largely unknown to panelists. This is an indication that these documents are not part of the political debate and that there is a need to popularise them.

Two pieces of draft legislation presently on the table could be attempts to domesticate the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa adopted 2002 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. These are the Broadcasting Bill, which seeks to reform the broadcasting sector, and the Right to Information Bill, which could lead to easier access to information held by state authorities.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.3 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

1.5 Print publications are not required to obtain permission to publish from state authorities.

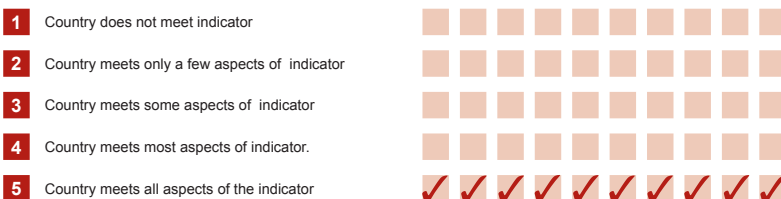
Article 162 (3) of the 1992 Constitution says:

There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a pre-requisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information.

Article 167 (d) provides for registration of newspapers and other publications by the National Media Commission with the proviso that such registration “shall not provide for the exercise of any direction or control” over media practitioners. There are scores of newspapers operating without such registration because there are no sanctions in the law for non-compliance.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

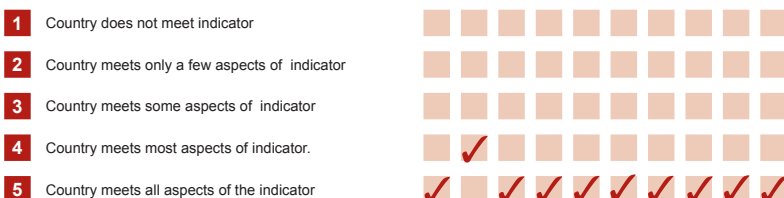
5.0 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

1.6 Entry into and practice of the journalistic profession is legally unrestricted.

There is no legal restriction on entering the journalistic profession.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.9 (2008: 4.8; 2006: 4.2)

1.7 Confidential sources of information are protected by law and/or the courts.

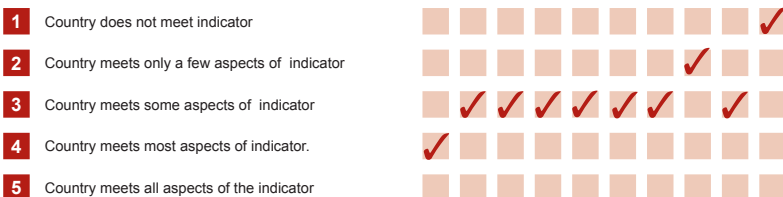
Confidential sources are not protected by law and the courts can compel an individual to disclose if that disclosure will serve the 'public good' or help to determine the outcome of a particular case. So far, however, no court has made such a ruling.

In practice, therefore, journalists can decide not to disclose their source of information. This right should be backed up by a law which gives journalists the same power that medical doctors and priests have not to disclose information about their patients or members of their congregation.

Because the confidentiality of sources is not legally protected but in effect practised, panelists differed quite considerably in their assessment and thus their scoring.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8 (2008: 1.1; 2006: 1.4)

1.8 Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to all citizens.

The 1992 Constitution in its article 21 (1) (f) says:

All persons shall have the right to ... information, subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a democratic society.

There is, however, no supporting legislation in place yet.

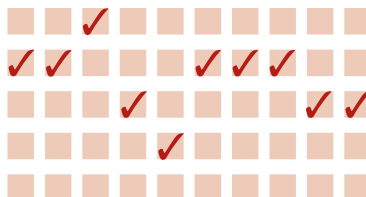
Currently, access to information held by government departments follows the “need to know” principle, i.e. access is at the discretion of the state authorities and will be granted depending on the relationship the information seeker has with the state agency concerned and also the type of information sought after or needed. The budget allocated to the military, for example, is not accessible at all, which means that the national budget as presented is not a true reflection of government expenditures. If the information sought is not classified it is relatively easy to get.

A Right to Information Bill has been on the table since 2003 but is criticised as falling short of the standards set by international documents and best practice. The draft seems to be under reconsideration right now as one of the committees set up by a commission tasked with the review of the constitution focuses on access to information and other related issues.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

2.4 (2008: 1.4; 2006: 1.2)

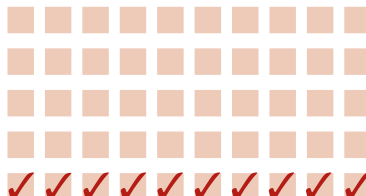
1.9 Websites and blogs are not required to register with or obtain permission from state authorities.

There is no requirement to register with or obtain permission from state authorities to operate websites or blogs.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

5.0 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

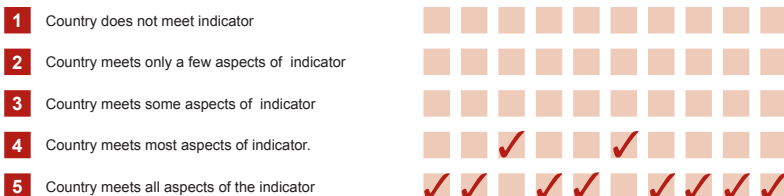
1.10 The state does not seek to block or filter Internet content unless laws provide for restrictions that serve a legitimate interest and are necessary in a democratic society.

The state does not seek to block or filter internet content in Ghana.

The police, however, operate an internet unit that checks on business scams or internet fraud and arrests culprits based on the information gathered. This is seen as part of the legitimate remit of the criminal prosecution authorities.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.8 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

1.11 Civil society in general and media lobby groups actively advance the cause of media freedom.

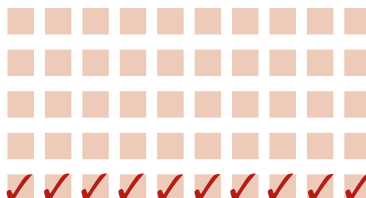
Civil society and media lobby groups in Ghana are very active in advocating and lobbying for media freedom.

Among these groups are the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Women in Broadcasting (WIB), Private Newspaper Association of Ghana (PRINPAG), Abantu for Development, Netright, and the Trade Unions Congress. The MFWA is seen as the lead agency for the advancement of media freedom in the country. It is in the forefront when it comes to litigation or the review of bills. The Foundation together with other media groups like the GJA have been strongly supporting and pushing for the passage of access to information legislation and a broadcasting law. GIBA was successful in preventing a move by the Food and Drugs Board to ban advertisements for alcoholic drinks which was regarded as endangering the sustainability of a diverse broadcasting landscape in Ghana.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

5.0 (2008: 2.5; 2006: 3.7)

1.12 Media legislation evolves from meaningful consultations among state institutions, citizens and interest groups.

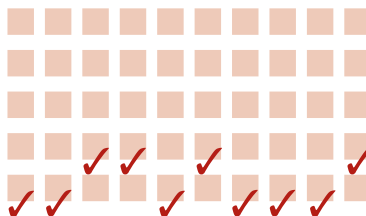
There is strong evidence that media legislation benefits from meaningful consultations because government by and large shows respect for citizens' contributions.

Some important pieces of legislation, however, seem to remain on the back burner despite lengthy consultations, such as the Right To Information Bill and the Broadcasting Bill.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

4.6 (2008: n/a, 2006: n/a)

Average score for sector 1:

4.1 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)*

* The indicators were reviewed, changed and shifted in 2009. Therefore the scores of some indicators and all sector scores are not comparable to scores of previous AMBs.

SECTOR 2:

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

2.1 A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, Internet) is available and affordable to citizens.

Print

There is quite a range of print media in the country. Government-owned newspapers are the dailies *Daily Graphic* and *The Ghanaian Times* as well as the weeklies *The Mirror* and *Weekly Spectator*. *Daily Graphic* and *The Mirror* are part of the stable of The Graphic Communications Group which also publishes the weeklies *Graphic Sports* and *Junior Graphic* as well as the bi-monthly *Graphic Advertiser*. Distribution figures are not available as they are treated as “business secrets”.

Privately owned daily papers are *The Dispatch*, *Accra Daily Mail*, *The Ghanaian Chronicle* and *The Daily Guide*. There is a plethora of private weeklies, bi-weeklies and tri-weeklies (according to one list 30 titles) with print-runs between 200 and 1000. Most of these newspapers are mainly interested in disseminating certain ideological perspectives rather than in running a business. They usually sell few copies because their messages are included in press reviews broadcast by most radio stations every morning between 7h30 and 10h00.

Newspapers cost between 1.50 and 3.00 Ghanaian cedis (US\$ 1.00 and 2.00¹), around half of the daily wage of 3.00 to 5.00 cedis for formal workers. This makes print media practically unaffordable for ordinary people.

Broadcasting

Radio reaches more than 90 per cent and television 82 per cent of the country.

The state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) runs two national radio stations (Radio 1 and Radio 2) as well as one station in each of the nine regions.

More than 200 non-state radio stations (around 180 commercial and 20 community-owned) have been licensed all over the country, with between 180 and

¹ www.xc.com 24/8/2011

190 of them being operational. The commercial stations are broadcasting mainly in cities and towns and hold licences in either of three categories: up to 100 km radial reach, up to 50 km, or less. They are run purely as businesses and their programming is market-driven.

GBC operates one television channel. In addition there are ten commercial TV stations, among them Metropolitan Entertainment TV (Metro TV), TV 3, TV Africa, Ghana Television (GTV) and a local station in Kumasi, Crystal TV. TV programming includes news, reality shows, religious programmes, soap operas/telenovelas, interviews and political discussions as well as religious programmes which take up the greater part of morning airtime on most TV stations.

Internet

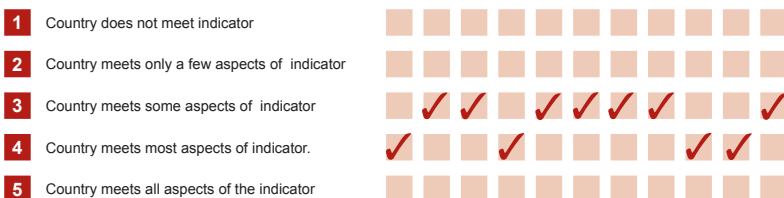
Internet penetration in Ghana is five per cent of the population, mainly in the major cities, where it is accessible from internet cafes, at homes, or from cell phones that have the internet facility.

Mobile phones

Official figures of mobile phone access are given as 17.5 million in a country of 24.2 million people. Many own more than one cell phone, though, connected to different providers to avoid high inter-connectivity costs.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

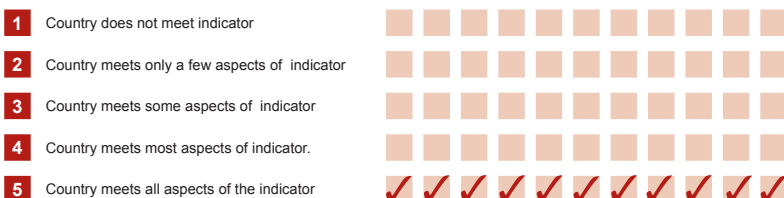
3.4 (2008: 3.2; 2006: 3.3)

2.2 Citizens' access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities.

There is no restriction on citizens' access to domestic and international media sources by state authorities.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

5.0 (2008: 4.8; 2006: 5.0)

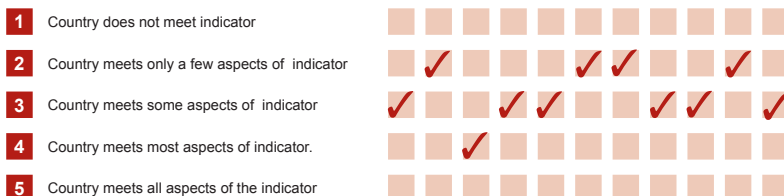
2.3 Efforts are undertaken to increase the scope of circulation of the print media, particularly to rural communities.

Increasing print media circulation in general poses a big challenge because newspapers are too expensive for most people and a quarter of all Ghanaians are illiterate.

One particular problem is the fact that many radio stations use the papers for their press review programmes where presenters simply read out articles in full – thus making it unnecessary for listeners to buy copies. Some radio stations in the capital Accra photocopy newspapers and send these to affiliated radio stations in other parts of the country. Print media news are often translated into different local languages spoken by the listeners within their broadcasting radius. These stories are sometimes so embellished, exaggerated and distorted that the real news content is lost in translation.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.7 (2008: 2.4; 2006: 1.2)

2.4 The editorial independence of print media published by a public authority is protected adequately against undue political interference.

Print media published by a public authority are the state-owned *Daily Graphic*, *The Ghanaian Times*, the weeklies *The Mirror* and *Weekly Spectator* as well as the *Ghanaian News Agency*.

The 1992 Constitution in article 167 (c) accords the National Media Commission the mandate “to insulate the state-owned media from government control”, and in article 168 makes the commission responsible for appointing the boards:

The Commission shall appoint the chairmen and other members of the governing bodies of public corporations managing the state-owned media in consultation with the President.

The selection of board members is done on the basis of nominations solicited from organisations represented on the NMC. Although the scope of groups involved in the process (listed under indicator 1.1) is limited, it is regarded as being quite representative of society as a whole. The president plays a dual role: being able to nominate candidates through his/her representative on the commission, as well as having to be consulted on the final selection. Experience so far, however, indicates that the NMC acts independently from the president evidenced by the fact that his nominees have been rejected on several occasions.

According to article 169 the boards appoint the editors of these media in consultation with the Public Services Commission.

The editorial independence of state-owned print media, defined as the freedom of editors to select, structure and determine the content of stories without interference, seems to be safeguarded as the boards are part of governance rather than management. If the boards have issues, they will rather discuss them among themselves and with management rather than interfere directly with editors.

Panelists working for both state-owned print media and independent media houses affirmed that there seems to be no interference by the boards as far as content is concerned.

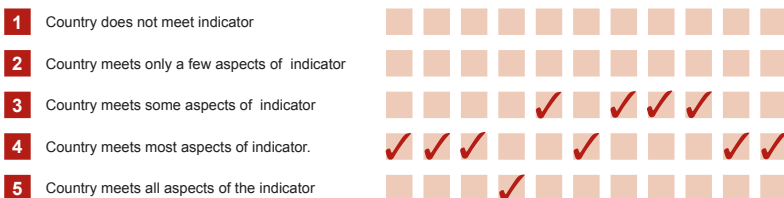
From time to time politicians call the newsrooms demanding changes or additions to particular stories. Editors from state-owned print media on the panel emphasised that such calls are treated like any other request from any citizen of Ghana. Editors would rather call upon the Managing Director to address any issue involving pressure or interference of any form from a politician. This, for panelists, proves how far Ghana has come since the 1980s and early 1990s when it was not possible to refuse such requests and any such attempt could have had dire consequences.

Regarding financial independence, the state-owned dailies do not rely on government for funding or subsidies because they are financially self-reliant. The Graphic Communications Group even pays dividends to government.

Some panelists expressed doubt whether this was not too rosy a picture, saying it was difficult to believe that there are no interferences at all. They referred to subtle forms of interference, evidenced by the fact that both the *Times* and the *Graphic* tend to be silent on controversial issues.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.7 (2008: 4.6; 2006: 3.6)

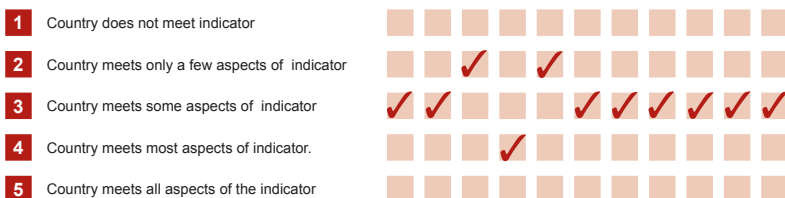
2.5 Adequate competition legislation/regulation seeks to prevent media concentration and monopolies.

The broadcasting regulator, the National Communication Authority (NCA), will issue only one radio or television licence per company. But there are ways in which this limitation is circumvented. Companies buy existing radio stations with licences. Multimedia Group Limited, for example, runs seven radio stations, among them Joy FM, and Multi TV. Other radio companies have affiliate stations throughout the country. The state-owned Graphic Communications Group is planning to also go into the radio and television business.

Such conglomerates could be used to consistently transmit a certain ideological stance to a wide audience, thus controlling the minds of millions of people. The planned new broadcasting legislation is expected to address this. It is feared though that unreasonably tight legislation on media concentration could stifle entrepreneurship in the sector.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.9 (2008: 2.5; 2006: 2.0)

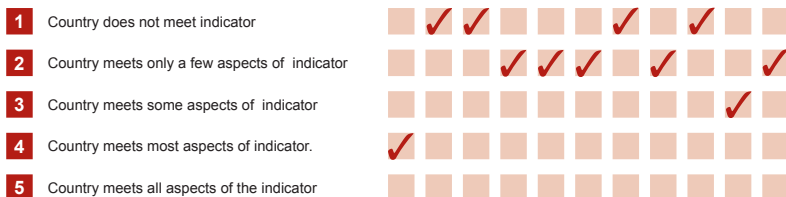
2.6 Government promotes a diverse media landscape with economically viable and independent media outlets.

There is no active promotion by government of a diverse media landscape in Ghana, apart from the fact that certain broadcasting equipment and television transmitters are exempted from import duty.

In general, however, it is regarded as “dangerous” for the government to provide any form of economic support for media because this could lead to a degree of dependence on the state.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.9 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

2.7 All media fairly reflect the voices of both women and men.

Generally, women do not get enough coverage by the media. A study commissioned by the Ghana Media Standards Improvement Project in 2010 showed that the voices of women are generally underrepresented in the media. For instance, in social news, 18 per cent coverage was given to women compared with 82 per cent for men. When quotes are attributed, 24 per cent of men were quoted directly while women were usually paraphrased.

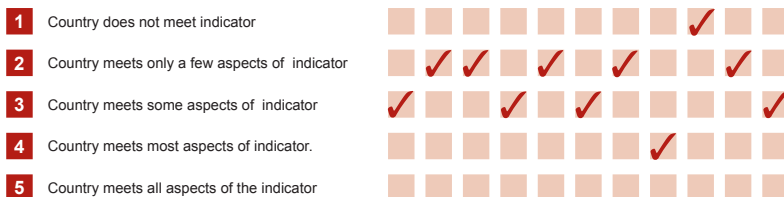
Stories on politics are dominated by men, reflecting the overall gender imbalance which is a major characteristic of Ghanaian society. Men are always in the forefront because ‘hard’ rather than ‘soft issues’ determine coverage and discussions in all media: “There is a market looking for hard news”. Owners of print and broadcasting houses are also mainly men.

Coverage is generally skewed against women. For example, during strike actions or demonstrations, those who get interviewed are men – those who usually lead the action. Women’s concerns are not heard because they are not asked for their opinions. This might be explained by the tendency that in such cases interviewers mainly approach the leaders of the action, who always happen to be men rather than focusing on the issues which affect both women and men.

In recent times, however, things seem to be changing. There is now greater participation of women in radio and television programmes, for example in phone-in shows. One example cited was a sports show, traditionally considered as the preserve of men, where as many female as male callers spoke out.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

2.8 All media fairly reflect the voices of society in its ethnic, linguistic, religious, political and social diversity.

More than forty languages are spoken in Ghana. The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation uses the six major languages, with Akan, that of the biggest ethnic grouping, dominating the programmes. This imbalance is countered at district and community levels, where the specific language of the particular area is used in broadcasting. Minority languages such as Guan or Hausa, however, seem to be neglected and need to be promoted.

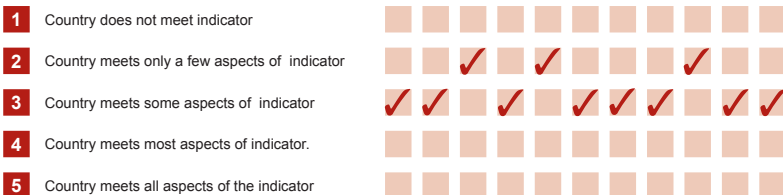
Unlike broadcasting, the print media are dominated by English.

As for religious diversity, Christianity receives by far the most attention by the media and minority faiths (70 per cent Muslim, 15 per cent indigenous beliefs) are neglected.

Political discourse in the key media concentrates on the two main political parties - the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), giving fairly little attention to minority parties.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

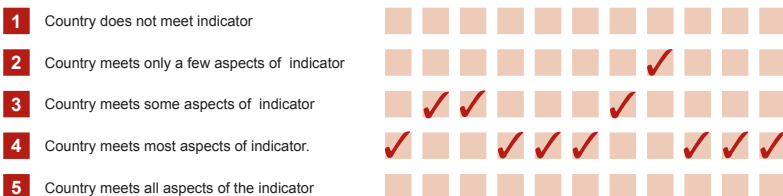
2.7 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

2.9 The country has a coherent ICT policy, which aims to meet the information needs of all citizens, including marginalised communities.

Ghana has an ICT policy in place. For rural communities government promotes Community Information Centers (CICs) which serve as information sources for citizens who have otherwise limited access to the internet. Although the roll-out to most communities is slow, it is happening. In addition, government is in the process of equipping primary schools with computers.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

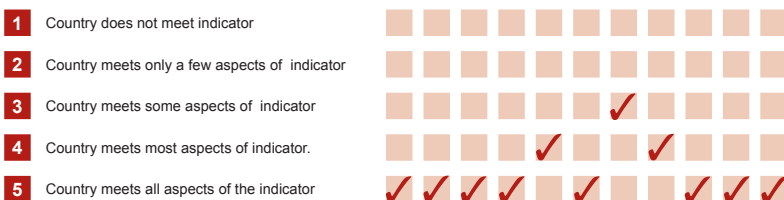
3.5 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

2.10 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with editorial content.

The government uses professional public relations agencies for the placement of advertisements.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.6 (2008: 3.5; 2006: 4.6)

2.11 The advertising market is large enough to support a diversity of media outlets.

The advertising market is fairly large.

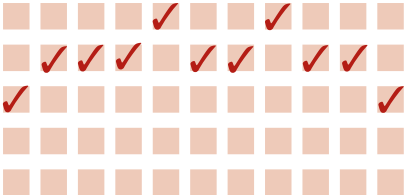
Airtime for commercial television spots in the private sector is underutilised, with take-up standing at just 30 per cent. One of the reasons is that the state broadcaster, which is subsidised by the taxpayer, offers below-market rates and therefore absorbs many of the government financed spots.

Small businesses cannot afford to place advertisements in the media, including print, because of the high rates charged.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

2.0 (2008: 2.7; 2006: 2.6)

Average score for sector 2:

2.0 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

SECTOR 3:

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

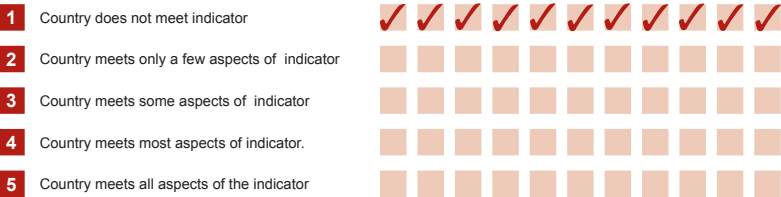
Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

3.1 Broadcasting legislation has been passed and is implemented that provides for a conducive environment for public, commercial and community broadcasting.

Broadcasting legislation in Ghana has been in the making for the last ten years, but no specific law has been passed yet.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.0 (2008: 1.2; 2006: 1.2)

3.2 Broadcasting is regulated by an independent body adequately protected by law against interference whose board is appointed – in an open way – involving civil society and not dominated by any particular political party.

Currently, broadcasting in Ghana is regulated by two bodies: the National Communications Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commission (NMC).

The NCA operates under the Ministry of Communications and Technology. According to article 6 of the NCA Act 2008 its Board of Directors is appointed by the President and consists of

- (a) the chairperson,
- (b) the Director General [also appointed by the President],
- (c) one representative of the
 - (i) National Security Council,
 - (ii) National Media Commission,
 - (iii) Ministry of Communications, not below the rank of a director,
- (d) one person with experience and expertise in communications, and
- (e) three other persons at least one of whom is a woman and each of whom has knowledge in electrical engineering, law, business or public administration.

These last mentioned requirements notwithstanding, appointments are made at the discretion of the President, without any involvement of civil society and in a non-transparent manner.

Article 3 describes the functions of the NCA, giving the Authority the power to “grant communication licence” and “regulate and monitor licensees, holders of frequency authorisations in consultation with the National Media Commission where appropriate”.

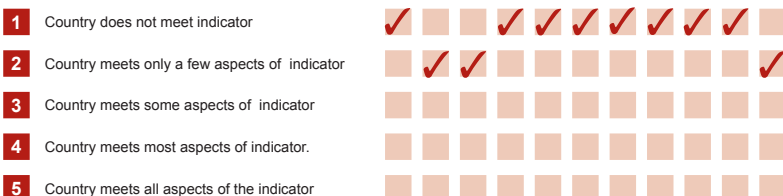
While the NMC which is seen as independent because of the way it is appointed, largely by civil society groups (see indicator 1.1), it plays only a minor role in the licensing of broadcasters: through its one member (out of nine) on the board of the NCA and in regard to regulation and monitoring when (and if) it is consulted.

The NMC does, however, have a certain degree of political power. When the National Security Council wanted to shut down radio stations during the 2008 elections campaign, the NMC fought that attempt successfully.

As long as there is no broadcasting law in place there is thus no independent body to regulate broadcasting.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.3 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

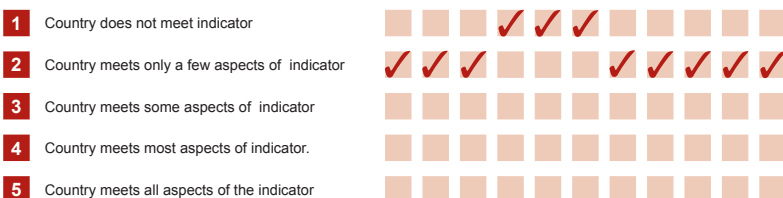
3.3 The body regulates broadcasting services and licences in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.

With the NCA being constituted as it is, there are no safeguards that it will act in the public interest or ensure fairness and a diversity of views.

Political considerations tend to influence its decisions especially in regard to commercial broadcasting houses. The NCA can always use technical reasons to deny frequencies or licences. There are cases where those who have been issued with licences have not demonstrated the capacity to really operate while those who may actually need them may not get the licence. Applications from community radios with their small reach seem to be considered in a fairer manner, thus allowing for the reflection of more diverse views.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

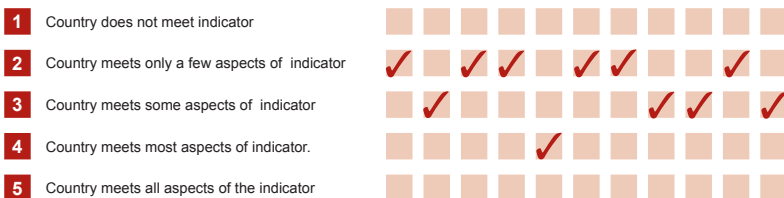
1.7 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

3.4 The state/public broadcaster is accountable to the public through a board representative of society at large and selected in an independent, open and transparent manner.

According to the 1992 constitution the board of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) is appointed by the NMC. As outlined under indicator 2.4 the organisations represented on the NMC nominate their respective candidates. In regard to broadcasting, some panelists questioned the transparency and openness of this procedure: “Sometimes it’s done in a hush-hush way”. They further doubted whether such a procedure could produce a board really representative of society at large, given the limited scope of bodies represented on the NMC. Others argued that in the modern business it would not be possible to make the process more open than it is now.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

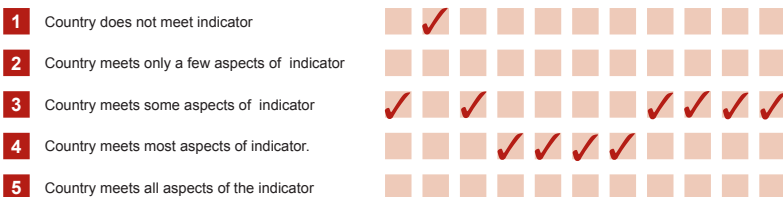
2.5 (2008: 3.8; 2006: 4.3)

3.5 Office bearers with the state and political parties, as well as those with a financial interest in the broadcasting industry, are excluded from possible membership on the board of the state/public broadcaster.

There are no political office bearers on the GBC board but there is no way of preventing that people with a financial interest in the industry, for example persons from advertising companies, become members.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.2 (2008: 2.8; 2006: 4.9)

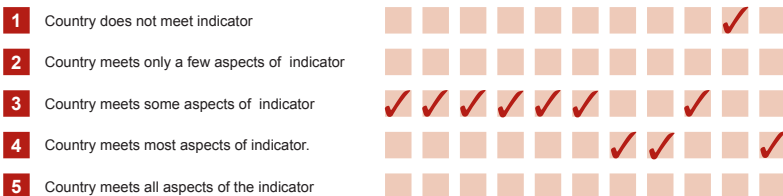
3.6 The editorial independence of the state/public broadcaster from political influence is guaranteed by law and practised.

It is the NMC's constitutional responsibility "to insulate the state-owned media from government control" (article 167 (c)) and thus to guarantee the editorial independence of the GBC.

To a very large extent the government takes a hands-off approach regarding the corporation's editorial decisions. But political parties, when they come in to power, tend to influence the GBC to make sure that their policies and activities become more visible. GBC's television service is more vulnerable to such prompting than its radio channels which have comparatively low ratings and therefore are seen as less influential. This results in the impression that GBC radio is more independent than GBC television.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.1 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

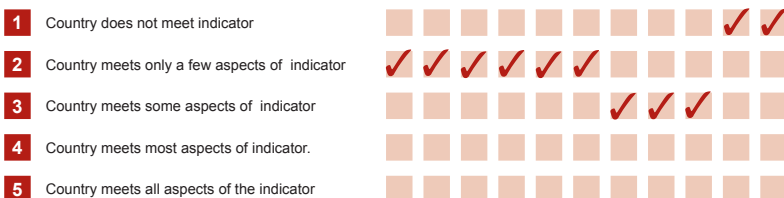
3.7 The state/public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from arbitrary interference through its budget and from commercial pressure.

The GBC is not adequately funded, it is in fact “financially disabled”. Subsidies from government are not even sufficient for salaries and sometimes the payment of staff is delayed.

In order to survive the GBC sells a lot of airtime, undercutting the rates set by the private competition, and has to succumb to the wishes of potential clients. The result is that the output of the GBC too often resembles that of a commercial broadcaster rather than offering a service to the public.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

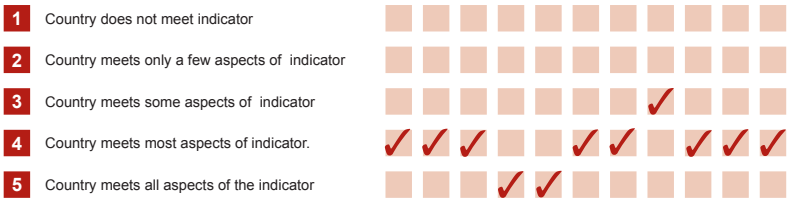
2.1 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

3.8 The state/public broadcaster is technically accessible in the entire country.

GBC's radio channels have nationwide coverage and television reaches 82 per cent of the country. The availability of electricity, however, remains a challenge with people being forced to improvise and use car batteries for example to power their television sets.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 4.1 (2008: 3.5; 2006: 4.1)

3.9 The state/public broadcaster offers diverse programming formats for all interests.

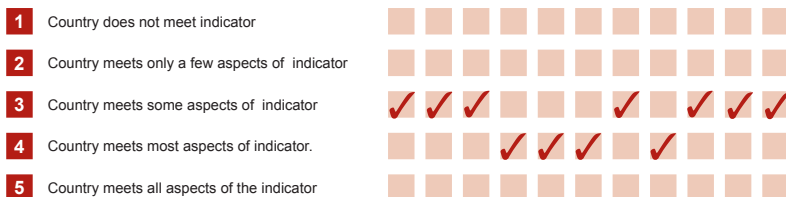
GBC national radio services broadcast in six languages with regional stations offering even more diversity because they use the main languages spoken in their respective areas. There is a variety of programme formats, including news, debates, arts, drama, stories, village productions, children and women programmes.

The packaging of these offerings seems to be rather old-fashioned compared with private stations and this results in low ratings. Another challenge is that GBC's salaries are determined by civil service tariffs. This means that the broadcaster cannot attract prominent radio personalities who could in turn draw larger audiences.

GBC television also broadcasts in six Ghanaian languages plus English. However, English dominates the schedules with the local languages limited to news and local productions. GTV offers a variety of formats, including chat shows and programmes focusing on education and health but most of these programmes lack creativity and mass appeal.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.4 (2008: 4.2; 2006: 4.9)

3.10 The state/public broadcaster offers balanced and fair information in news and current affairs, reflecting the full spectrum of diverse views and opinions.

GTV's news bulletins usually follow the hierarchy of government institutions with the President and Vice-President leading the news, followed by ministers in the order of their seniority, other politicians and so on. Government activities on average take up 70 per cent of news items with the rest dedicated to the opposition and other organisations in society. "TV news go the lazy way, follow the status quo and seem still to be mentally imprisoned by the past."

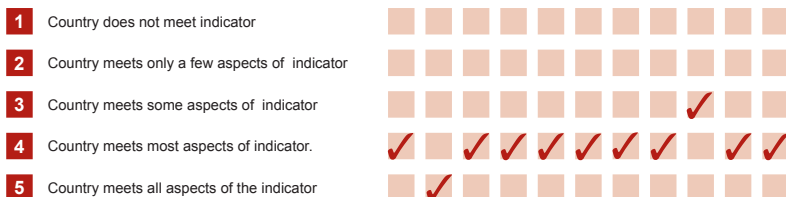
*"TV News...
seem still to
be mentally
imprisoned by
the past"*

Radio news take a more journalistic approach, having more regard to newsworthiness.

Current affairs programmes in both radio and television, on the other hand, are perceived to be following the principle of fairness, presenting diverse views and opinions and thus balancing the slant of TV news. Sometimes, however, the definition of 'current' seems to be applied too rigidly because items are selected only on the basis of actuality and not also because of the relevance of issues of concern to the public.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.0 (2008: 3.9; 2006: 4.7)

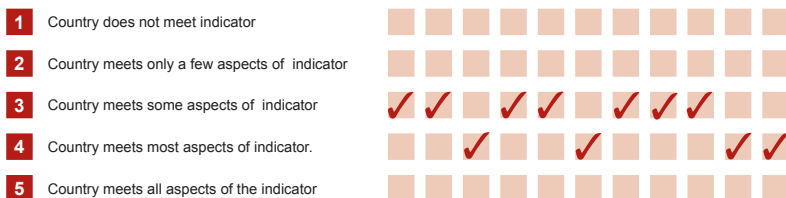
3.11 The state/public broadcaster offers as much diverse and creative local content as economically achievable.

Radio, the regional stations in particular, offer a variety of mainly locally produced programmes.

Television also produces a sizeable amount of local programming, shows for children and women, soap operas, music and adult education shows. A point of concern is that GBC seems to be under pressure to compete with the commercial sector and too often simply adapts formats of foreign shows rather than creating original Ghanaian offerings.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

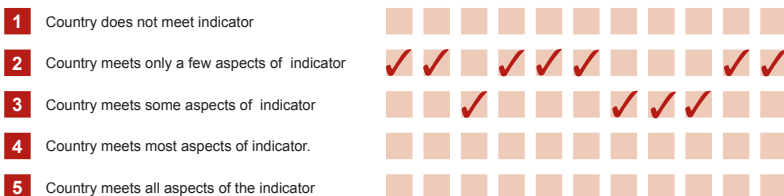
3.4 (2008: 3.7; 2006: 2.7)

3.12 Community broadcasting enjoys special promotion given its potential to broaden access by communities to the airwaves.

There is no special promotion or support from government for community radios except their exemption from certain import taxes for broadcasting equipment. Community radio is promoted by civil society organisations and non-government organisations set up their small stations as an outreach network to support their activities.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.4 (2008: 2.2; 2006: 1.0)

Average score for sector 3:

2.7 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

SECTOR 4:

The media practise high levels of professional standards.

The media practise high levels of professional standards.

4.1 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by self-regulatory bodies that deal with complaints from the public.

The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) has a code of professional ethics for media houses and individuals, which is currently under review in order to update it. Many journalists do not know about the existence of the code let alone its content and its application. About half of the print media operate without any recourse to the GJA code of ethics, or any other code for that matter, and act as a “free-range kind of media”. Those journalists who have had training in journalism seem to know the code and tend to adhere to it more than those without any formal professional training. To enforce the code GJA has an Ethics and Disciplinary Council that deals with complaints from the public.

Major media houses either have their own codes or are following the GJA standards or both. The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) has its own code and adherence to these guidelines is rated as very good. The Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) also has its own code of ethics, which is used in conjunction with the GJA's code of conduct. In cases of serious breaches of these codes, the offending radio station can be expelled from the association – quite a severe sanction as GIBA offers a range of business opportunities which are vital for its members. Unfortunately only 116 out of the 160 private radio stations operating in Ghana are members of GIBA and those who opted to stay outside cannot be called to order by the association. The private television stations on the other hand operate with extreme caution and follow high levels of standards, which make them more compliant with the codes.

The Daily Graphic has its own in-house Code of Professional Ethics and the *Ghanaian Times* follows GJA's code. Though retractions are rare, both papers do publish them when necessary.

The statutory National Media Commission has the mandate

... to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media (Article 167 (b) 1992 Constitution).

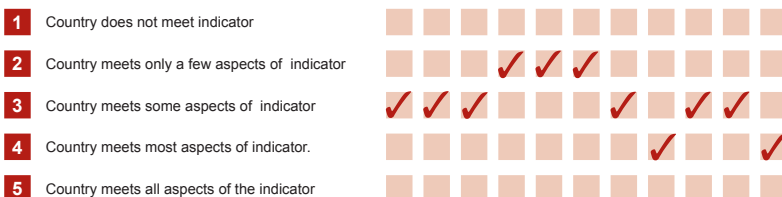
To this end the NMC has developed “guidelines” for print media and broadcasting houses and established a Complaints Committee. The NMC is perceived to be more effective in dealing with the conduct of state-owned media houses. In regard to private media – both print and broadcasting – the NMC is seen as a “toothless dog”. Practitioners in these media have been summoned before the Complaints Committee for what was considered improper conduct or asked to retract a story with apologies. The defendants, however, generally refer to article 173 of the constitution, which prohibits the NMC from exercising “any control or direction over the professional functions” of media practitioners.

When the new government came into power in 2009, it attempted to change the constitution in order to bring media policy and regulation under the authority of the minister of information and introduce statutory sanctions against media houses. However, it faced strong resistance from the NMC and media associations and the bid was “shot down”.

The general assessment is that the self-regulatory mechanisms – with all their flaws – are working more efficiently than the statutory NMC because they serve as “courts of honour” and their “name-and-shame” sanctions seem to be the strongest weapon against unethical practices.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.9 (2008: 2.9; 2006: 2.8)

4.2 The standard of reporting follows the basic principles of accuracy and fairness.

While the major print media try to follow the principles of accuracy and fairness, the standard of radio journalism is currently of special concern to observers of the media scene in Ghana.

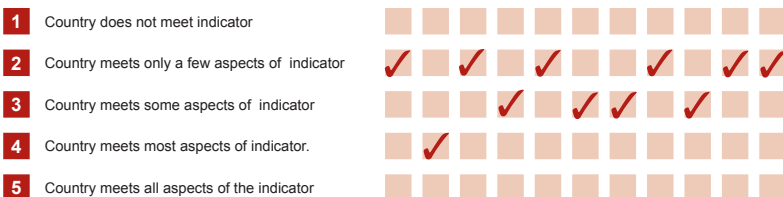
News reporting is frequently full of metaphors and embellishments, which distort the essence of stories. On-air discussions are habitually unprofessional. People are accused of wrongdoing without being heard: “Victims” of alleged misconduct are interviewed live and the “suspect” is urged to call to defend him-/herself without any prior warning. The language used is often indecent and sexualised.

The behaviour of politicians on air contributes to the malaise. They usually trade insults and unsubstantiated allegations. Broadcasting stations tend to invite only politicians to such discussions, rather than a broad range of other stakeholders in civil society, who are affected by the issues debated. Talk shows are thus turned into political platforms for the two main political parties NDC and NPP and citizens not affiliated to these formations tend to shy away from such discussions rather than associating themselves with any of the two. As a result many radio programmes contribute to the separation of Ghanaian society into two factions and tensions between them.

There is an urgent need for editors to get together to address these tendencies which are quite offensive and an indication of disregard for the interests of the general public.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5 (2008: 2.5; 2006: 2.8)

4.3 The media cover the full spectrum of events, issues and cultures, including business/economics, cultural, local and investigative stories.

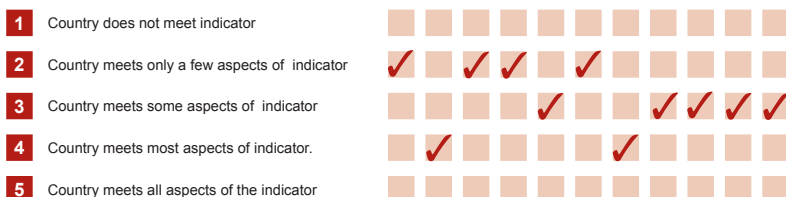
The range of issues covered by the media, both print and broadcasting, is broad but skewed in favour of political office holders. Media “actually ride on the back of politicians’ discourses”. Livelihood and labour issues, topics concerning women,

social and health problems, for instance, are neglected, with broadcasting doing better in this regard than the print media.

There are few investigative stories because of a lack of capacity, commitment and “courage” to tackle such reportage.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8 (2008: 3.2; 2006: 4.0)

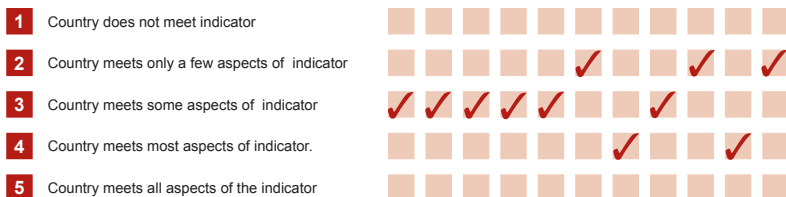
4.4 Equal opportunities regardless of race, social group, gender/sex, religion, disabilities and age are promoted in media houses.

The panel focused on equal opportunities with regard to gender. Around 60 per cent of practising journalists in Ghana are women and they outnumber men even more among new entrants into the field: 70 per cent of diploma graduates are female. Most television stations have women newsroom editors and at GBC the head of television news is also a woman. The Graphic Communications Group with its six titles has two female editors and two female deputy editors. At the *Ghanaian Times* the news editor as well as the features and foreign editors are also women.

But the picture is not all rosy. The type of work assigned to women more often than not deals with ‘soft’ topics like women and health stories, although many female journalists have moved beyond these limitations. Maternity leave often means that women lose out on training opportunities or promotions. Radio stations are even hesitant to employ women because they might go on maternity leave.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.9 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

4.5 Journalists and editors do not practise self-censorship.

There is wide-spread self-censorship in Ghana – for political and commercial reasons.

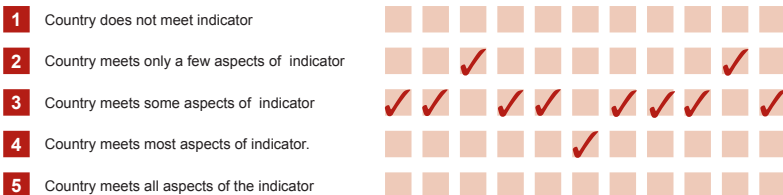
GBC radio journalists feel free to do their work professionally. At GBC television, however, many editors are still haunted by the past which demanded self-censorship if one wanted to avoid punitive measures, and therefore they continue to follow the “line of officialdom”.

In privately owned media it is mostly business interests that cause self-censorship. If a story could hurt a major advertiser, it will be toned down or dropped altogether. “Without self-censorship, the business may pay dearly for it.” If a broadcast programme is sponsored by a company it is nearly impossible to carry a critical story on that firm in that slot.

In some cases, self-censorship is applied because of relationships journalists may have with a central figure in a story and this can also lead to dropping the story.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.9 (2008: 3.5; 2006: 3.7)

4.6 Owners of established mainstream private media do not interfere with editorial independence.

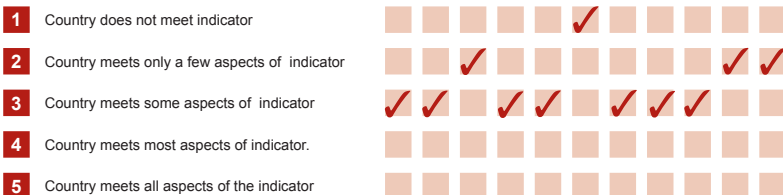
Owners will interfere with the work of editors whenever his/her business interests are at stake. In one instance, the owner is in the habit of calling editors at the beginning of the year and reading out a list of “cash cows” (i.e. advertisers) who have to be treated with care.

Other owners of radio stations or print media who are politicians or politically connected recruit their staff according to their political orientation and sometimes interfere directly when sensitive stories have to be carried. In their normal day-to-day work journalists at these media houses do not need to be told what to do – “they know where they are”.

In some cases owners are veteran journalists themselves and play the role of advisers due to their experience. This is regarded as helping to enrich the stories rather than interference.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5 (2008: 2.3; 2006: 1.4)

4.7 Journalists and media houses have integrity and are not corrupt.

It is not clear how widespread corruption is amongst journalists in Ghana but it can take several forms: receiving money to write stories in a certain way, accepting other favours, or being blackmailed to refrain from publishing certain stories. These practices are not as common any more as they used to be, although there are still journalists around who are “forced to mortgage their integrity by poverty”.

“looking at society in Ghana as a whole, journalists are not too bad”

Transportation allowances for media practitioners to travel to press conferences, for example, are considered legitimate, although some media houses now have a policy that does not allow their journalists to accept such support. Civil society organisations, however, are complaining that they are compelled to pay journalists for staying in “plush hotels” if they want to have their events covered.

Cultural practices sometimes make it difficult for journalists to maintain their integrity, i.e. their “ability to meet the standards expected of journalists and to resist any form of influence that will take journalists from these standards”. On the occasion of Christmas or a bereavement in the family it is a tradition for donations to be given which are culturally problematic to reject. Where such a gift is excessive (“a heavy envelope”) this certainly does constitute corruption and it will need courage to tell the donor that although one accepts the donation one will not be influenced by it in any way.

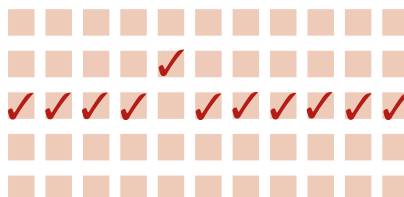
Other forms of corruption are politically motivated (“habitually reporting in a certain way”) or due to ethnic considerations - when a journalist exercises inappropriate caution if a story goes against his/her own tribe.

Generally there was consensus amongst panelists that “looking at society in Ghana as a whole, journalists are not too bad”.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Country does not meet indicator |
| 2 | Country meets only a few aspects of indicator |
| 3 | Country meets some aspects of indicator |
| 4 | Country meets most aspects of indicator. |
| 5 | Country meets all aspects of the indicator |



Average score:

2.9 (2008 n/a; 2006: n/a)

4.8 Salary levels and general working conditions for journalists and other media practitioners are adequate.

Salary levels are considered low in general terms and they differ widely between the state broadcaster and other media houses.

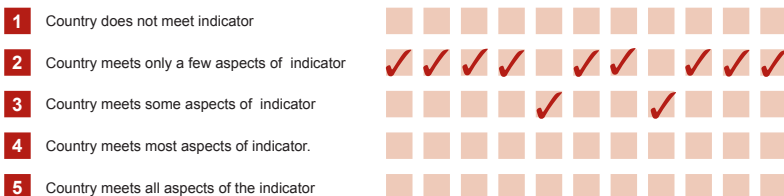
The average salary of a reporter with the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) is GHS400 (US\$264) and for a newsroom editor between GHS 600 and 700 (US\$ 396 – 462). Reporters in the private sector take home similar salaries while editors are paid around GHS 2000 (US\$ 1320). Salaries at the state-owned *Daily Graphic* top the list with reporters earning GHS 750 (US\$ 495) and editors take GHS 2500 (US\$ 1650). All these salaries come with other benefits like free medical care.

‘Star journalists’ at radio stations are paid huge salaries to keep them on board as their names or ‘brands’ are virtually synonymous with those stations.

Small media houses in the private sector offer much lower salaries and are not able to pay regular wages for months. Many journalists in this sector are temporarily employed.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.2 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

4.9 Media professionals have access to training facilities offering formal qualification programmes as well as opportunities to upgrade skills.

Diploma courses at the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) or the School of Communication Studies (SCS) at the University of Ghana take between two and three years and degree courses three to four years to complete.

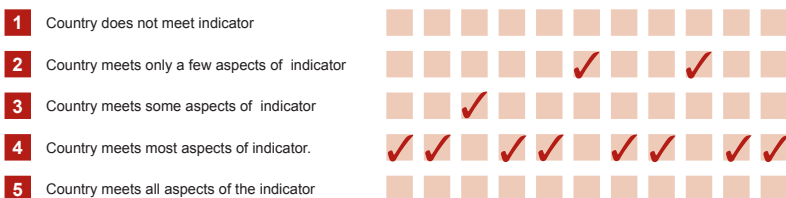
Currently, 700 aspiring journalists are studying at the GIJ and 200 take their final exams every year – a number that the market is not capable to absorb.

From 2012, the SCS will also offer a “sandwich programme” for working journalists who seek to obtain a degree either to upgrade their skills or to start an academic career; the intake will be 40 part-time students. This programme is considered extremely expensive with the annual fee for a MPhil course standing at GHS 4200 (US\$ 2772).

In addition to these training opportunities, local and international organisations offer courses on cross-cutting themes, topical issues and subject matter like financial reporting, economics and court reporting. These organisations include, for example, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), which trains journalists in community radio skills, the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), which organizes capacity training workshops or the Ghana Agriculture Workers Union (GAWU), which offers courses for journalists on food aid and food security issues. Broadcasting houses cooperate closely with Deutsche Welle, Radio Netherlands or the British Broadcasting Corporation all of which offer training, short courses and exchange programmes for selected journalists from Ghana.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.5 (2008: 3.8; 2006: 4.7)






4.10 Journalists and other media practitioners are organised in trade unions and/or professional associations.

The Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) has a membership of about 1000 practitioners. There are stringent conditions for membership: journalists holding a diploma from recognised institutions need three years post qualification experience. Those with a master's degree must have practiced for two years and senior secondary school graduates for five years. Other professional bodies are the Sports Writers Association of Ghana (SWAG) or Women in Broadcasting (WIB).

All fully employed journalists, except at management level, are unionised in the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union and the Public Services Workers Union. Their membership fees are automatically from their salaries. These unions focus on issues of working conditions and pay insufficient attention to policy advocacy work.

Scores:

Individual scores:

1	Country does not meet indicator	
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator	
3	Country meets some aspects of indicator	
4	Country meets most aspects of indicator.	
5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator	

Average score:

3.5 (2008: 4.0; 2006: 4.7)

Average score for sector 4:

2.9 (2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE:

3.2 (2008: 3.0; 2006: 3.0)

Developments since 2008 and the Way Forward

Negative trends in the last three years

- **Media legislation stalled:** There is no progress whatsoever in the development of the Right to Information Bill and the Broadcasting Bill.
- **Public broadcasting reform stalled:** There is no development whatsoever in regard to the transformation of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation into a truly public broadcasting service.
- **Journalistic professional standards are slipping:**
 - over-concentration in all media on politics and neglect of most other topics that affect the public;
 - lack of coverage of local communities;
 - main objective of mainstream media is to make money; this has resulted in a trend towards sensationalism and the emergence of too many tabloid formats in the print media;
 - main objective of many smaller media houses is only to disseminate ideological positions;
 - trading of insults in radio talks shows;
 - growing number of breaches of codes of professional standards.

Positive trends in the last three years

- **More media houses:** The increase in the number of media outlets is having a positive impact on
 - pluralism of voices and views on more diverse channels;
 - opportunities for journalists to be employed;
 - degree of professionalism because of more competition in the labour market.
- **Quality of journalism has improved in a number of respects:**
 - journalists are more fearless;
 - there are more critical and in-depth stories;
 - more specialization of journalists covering areas such as human rights, women's rights issues, decentralisation, climate change or the oil and gas industry;
 - female journalists have moved beyond covering women's issues only.
- **More training opportunities:** The number of training institutions for journalists has increased and there is a wider variety of training programmes at different levels of certification.

Activities needed over the next few years

- The National Media Commission (NMC) needs to be strengthened in terms of funding and other support to enable it to set up a monitoring system.
- The structure of the NMC needs to be reviewed in order to secure greater independence from state authorities.
- Lobby efforts for broadcasting legislation must be intensified with the objective to make the NMC the sole regulator for broadcasting.
- Advocacy should be increased for more independence of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) through appropriate legislation.
- The GBC needs to be strengthened in its capacity to produce more attractive quality programmes.
- Civil society organisations need to sensitise and educate themselves and others on the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting to enable them to lobby for
 - speeding up of the process;
 - appropriate subsidization of set-top boxes to make the digital signals accessible to all citizens.

The African Media Barometer Report should be used as a working tool for media and civil society organisations to make its findings more relevant to the development of the media landscape in Ghana.

The panel meeting took place at the Volta Hotel, Akosombo, 5 to 7 August 2011.

The Panel:

Ms Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo, communications lecturer; Ms Susan Aryeetey, human rights activist; Mr Alhassan Haruna, manager private broadcasting; Mr Ato Kobbie, editor private magazine; Dr Rose Mensah-Kutin, women's rights activist; Ms Cathy Bob Milliar, rural development activist; Mr Affail Monney, editor state broadcasting and media activist; Mr Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah, trade unionist; Mr Kweku Rockson, journalism lecturer; Mr Ransford Tetteh, editor state newspaper and media activist; Mr Francis Tuffour, senior reporter state newspaper

The facilitator:

Mr Hendrik Bussiek

Rapporteur:

Ms Beatrix Allah-Mensah

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

Ghana Office
Ring Road East, opp.US-Embassy
P.O. Box 9722 KIA
Accra, Ghana
Tel: +233 21 77 24 71
Fax: +233 21 77 29 90
E-Mail: office@fesghana.org

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

fesmedia Africa
P.O. Box 23652, Windhoek
Namibia
Tel: +264 61 237438
Fax: +264 61 237441
E-mail: info@fesmedia.org
www.fesmedia.org



fesmedia Africa

No. 978-99916-873-7-7

Published by:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)
fesmedia Africa
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264 (0)61 237438
E-mail: info@fesmedia.org
www.fesmedia.org

© Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

ISBN

No. 978-99916-873-7-7

FREE COPY

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this volume do not necessarily reflect the views of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung or *fesmedia Africa*. *fesmedia Africa* does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work.