

International Media Support (IMS)

Terms of Reference

Institutional Review of IMS' 2020-2023 strategy implementation

1. Introduction

Formed in 2001, IMS is a non-profit organisation working to support and promote free and professional media in countries experiencing armed conflict, human insecurity, political transition, and authoritarian rule. In more than 40 countries across four continents, IMS works to promote and strengthen professional journalism, safety for media workers and press freedom. IMS' approach strives for locally owned initiatives that are implemented in collaboration with local, regional and international partners and relevant civic groups to:

- Ensure members of the public can access, participate in, and be fairly portrayed by the media, regardless of gender, identities, and socio-economic circumstances.
- Protect media workers from risks and threats that may prevent them from producing and distributing public interest content.
- Challenge disinformation and hate speech.
- Advocate for laws and policies that protect free expression and access to information, as well as promote transparent and accountable self-regulation of content.

IMS' is based in Copenhagen. The programme work is divided into 22 country programmes and several regional and thematic programmes across four geographically defined departments – Eastern Europe and Global Response, Africa, Asia and MENA, with several branch offices in Africa, Asia and the MENA region.

2. Background

In 2020 IMS adopted a 4-year strategy featuring a revised Theory of Change (ToC), that established three strategic priorities for 2020-2023:

1. Enhance the quality and inclusivity of *public interest content* and the viability of media producing and distributing this content – with the aim of producing content that audiences trust, and civic/civil organisations use. (Outcome Area 1 of the Theory of Change)
2. Create conditions that encourage the viable production, distribution, and consumption of inclusive interest content through focus on the *enabling environments* – subdivided into:
 - *Safety, protection and impunity* with the aim of furthering local safety mechanisms that protect media workers of all genders and mitigate the risks they face and address impunity (Outcome Area 2), and
 - *Policy and Law* with the aim of advancing laws and policies in line with international human rights standards; address information and hate speech, and; Resist restrictions on human rights. (Outcome Area 3)
3. Undertake the organisational development necessary for IMS to implement the strategy – focusing on strategic and organisational development of IMS and the sources of financing.

The strategy highlights the focus of IMS of working in partnerships and seeking to build partners' capacity, and on collaboration and facilitation of alliances and coalitions. Furthermore, gender equality and digital freedoms are identified as cross-cutting elements integral to all outcome areas in the Theory of Change.

Strategy implementation

Following the adaptation of the 2020-2023 strategy, all programmes have gradually been aligned with the institutional ToC, and an institutional results framework including systems to harvest outcomes and improve documentation of results have been adopted. A crosscutting hub, to serve as a community of practice related to IMS work and expertise within the Outcome Area 1 – Public Interest Journalism has been created to serve as a community of practice and center of excellence. Similar structures are under development for the other Outcome Areas.

A new gender equality strategy based on intersectional feminist values and practices was adopted in 2021 and is currently being rolled out across the organisation. The gender equality strategy is meant to be fully incorporated into the new IMS strategy. Similarly, a new area of cross-cutting development and support has gradually been established on Tech, including the formulation of a Disinformation and Public Interest Infrastructure Strategy to help partners and IMS to navigate in the changing settings and to engage partners with local tech innovators, global tech companies and stakeholders.

Since it was formed IMS has worked with a collaborative and partner focused approach, seeking to act catalytic and to support partners in building robust organisations and local or local/international coalitions that can further the media development agenda. In addition this approach has been thought to ensure local ownership and sustainability of initiatives. During the strategy implementation period, IMS has undertaken a revision of the partner management framework, to revitalize the trust-based foundation of the partnership approach, further transparency, and ability to forward funds in line with the localisation agenda.

During strategy implementation several in-depth reviews have been undertaken of specific parts of IMS' portfolio, including several country reviews, smaller reviews of implementation of the UNSCR 1325 through the media; IMS work in the HDP Nexus a.o.

Financial developments and organizational growth

During the strategy implementation period, IMS has continued its growth. Funding levels are up by almost 50% compared to 2019 – with the largest levels of growth seen in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe/Central Asia. At the same time funding streams have been further diversified, Nordic donors providing approx. 72% of total funding. The number of staff have increased, many of the new positions being placed in programme countries and in the boost of cross-cutting advisor functions to improve quality programming and MEL as well as knowledge generation and expertise to back implementation on the outcome areas.

Sida and the Norwegian MFA are the only donors providing core funding to the implementation of IMS' strategy as a whole. The funding provided through the core agreements, is of particular importance for IMS' ability to flexibly appoint funds where needed, for innovative approaches and development of expertise. The funding is also used to back programmes in particular need, and (in the case of Norway) for special emphasis on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Further to the core support these donors also provide specific country programme or regional programmes. In 2022, 24 out of 32 programmes of IMS were directly supported with either Swedish Sida or Norwegian MFA funds.

As per the agreements with Sida and the Norwegian MFA, IMS shall have a review carried out towards the end of the strategy implementation period with a view to assess progress achieved and generate recommendations for the next strategy and programming period.

This review

This Terms of Reference (ToR) stipulates objectives, scope of work and expected methodology for the review to be carried out during Q3 and Q4 of 2023. The review findings shall serve as input to the planning of a new strategy implementation period and for donors' assessment of IMS' work prior to a possible new funding period. In Q4 of 2023, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danish MFA) has commissioned a review of IMS, as a standardized measure for organisations holding strategic partnerships with Danida. The Danish MFA-led review is set to cover both strategic and programmatic efforts (linked to the agreement with Danida) as well a review of organisational/administrative, and financial management.

3. Objective

The objective of the review is to assess, among key stakeholders, the impact, relevance and coherence of IMS' 2020-2023 strategy and the strategy implementation across different operational contexts and to provide recommendations for IMS to continue to be strategically relevant and fit for future challenges.

4. Scope of work

The focus of the review is IMS' institutional strategy and its implementation at global level. To be able to assess that, and provide recommendations for the next strategy period, the evaluators shall do in-depth assessments and interviews with IMS staff and partners in four different country programmes – selected to broadly represent IMS' work, different types of contexts and the four programme departments of IMS. The suggested programs for in-depth assessments are: Pakistan, Moldova, Palestine and Somalia.

For each of the four selected programmes the review team shall assess IMS' strategy implementation focusing on the period 2020-2022 including;

- a) *Results achieved* and (potential) *impact* of strategy implementation for the targeted groups and partners in each context.
- b) *Relevance* of the three strategic outcome areas, the cross-cutting focus on gender equality and digital freedom, and the programme design applied to address the challenges faced by the local media sector and civic groups'; for them to further human rights, accountability and positive social, political and cultural changes;
- c) Stakeholders' perception of *coherence* of the interventions and IMS' ability to undertake adaptive management in view of contextual needs and actions of other international and local actors.
- d) the *effectiveness* of programme interventions to meet programme objectives, and
- e) considerations on the a) contributions of the programmes to build local ownership and facilitate broad partnerships and b) the *added value* provided by IMS as a global actor in engagement with local partners (including work to further alliance-building, local-global collaboration) etc.

At the overall institutional level, and with a view to findings in the four country programmes, the review team shall

- f) assess *coherence* and *relevance* of IMS' strategic outcome areas and cross-cutting priority areas with a view to the stated vision and mission and contexts of operation,
- g) based on global stakeholders' views, reflect on IMS relevance as a global actor in its field
- h) provide recommendations as to how IMS going forward – in a cost-efficient way – can monitor the impact of growth and costs in relation to the collaborative approach and outcomes of inventions,
- i) taking point of departure in IMS' particular characteristics and strengths and input from partners assess IMS' current practice and approach within the targeted programmes to localised and transformative development and discuss how IMS' in its future strategy can further develop its approach and set-up, to back local led and transformative public interest media development that can be sustained over time.
- j) Based on findings provide recommendations for IMS' to be strategically relevant and fit for future challenges in the next global strategy period.

5. Time schedule and deliverables

The review is expected to be carried out between September and November 2023.

During this period, the following deliverables must be made by the review team:

- *An inception note*, based on desk review of relevant material and initial interviews with IMS staff and representatives of Sida and the Norwegian MFA, outlining the proposed methodology and workplan shall be provided by the team by *September 21, 2023*.
- *A draft report* in a format agreed with IMS, by *November 10th, 2023*. Based on which the review team, IMS staff shall have a debriefing session and provide input before the final report is issued.
- *Final Report*. Based on input and comments received on the draft report and in a debrief meeting, a final report in English shall be delivered to IMS. The report shall be maximum 50 pages long, excluding annexes, and shall contain an executive summary highlighting key findings and recommendations.

6. Maximum budget for the Assignment

The maximum budget amount available for the review is € 60.000.

7. Method of Work

IMS envisage the review being structured as follows:

1 Desk review and inception note: The review team shall conduct a desk study of relevant strategies, policies, key grant documents, existing reviews and evaluations and selected programme documentation. The review team shall conduct kick off interviews with representatives of IMS and of Sida and Norwegian MFA and based on this compile an inception note, explaining proposed methodology and outline of a work plan.

2 Data gathering through field visits, digital interviews, workshops etc.: The review team shall base their analysis partly on deep-dive desk studies of reviews carried out over the past two years, field studies in at two programme countries (suggested to be Moldova and Pakistan), coupled with in person and or digital interviews with key stakeholders (partners from other programmes, other actors in the field, government representatives, international agencies etc). The analysis of the Somalia programme is expected based on documentation already in place from several reviews, combined with follow up interviews. For the case of Palestine, the review is expected to base its analysis, on review findings brought about in a simultaneous review process for Sida on IMS' MENA programmes, combined with follow up interviews. Parts of the interviews can also be conducted as group interviews or explorative workshops.

3 Analysis and input from IMS: The review team should analyse the information gathered and prepare a draft report to be discussed in a workshop with selected IMS staff and senior management. Based on comments and input from the workshop, an updated draft report is presented to IMS and donors, who will have the possibility to comment on the draft report, prior to the submission of the final report.

The form and timing of all activities shall be agreed with IMS.

8. Qualifications and expertise

The bidder/team shall have the following profile and qualifications, as represented by the team members:

- Documented experience of conducting evaluations of development aid programmes following OECD/DAC (2019) *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions*, or the equivalent previous version of the guidance.
- Documented experience of having conducted at least three evaluations, within the last six years of programmes/projects, funded by any of the following donors: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA); Sida; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark – *Danida*; the European Commission (EC) - *The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument*.
- Documented thematic experience within the field of media development and support. The experience can be, but not limited to, having conducted relevant evaluations and studies, compiled reports, papers and/or other academic or non-academic studies relating to media development and support.
- Documented experience in using various methodologies and tools for gender sensitive MEL is considered an asset.
- Documented thematic experience of the localisation agenda, and the concept of decolonising aid, is considered an asset.
- Documented experience from IMSs programme countries (see mediasupport.org for a list of countries), is considered an asset.
- Ability to present written and oral information in English. Additional language skill from any IMS programme countries is considered an asset but is not a requirement.

The review team shall consist of a minimum of 2 consultants, including one Team leader, meeting the listed requirements below. In the technical proposal, the bidder must indicate the proposed team members and their qualifications (CV:s):

○ **Team Leader:**

- Minimum Master of Arts degree in any of the following subjects: social sciences, journalism, law, economics, international relations, or equivalent.
- Minimum 10 years of documented experience of conducting equivalent evaluations of development aid programmes following OECD/DAC (2019) *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions*, and the equivalent previous version of the guidance.
- Documented thematic experience of media development and support; The experience can be, but not limited to, experience from work in the field of media development and support and/or with international platforms and networks engaged with media development and support; having conducted relevant evaluations and studies; or equivalent.
- Documented experience in using various methodologies and tools for gender sensitive MEL is considered an asset.
- Documented thematic experience of the localisation agenda, and the concept of decolonising aid, is considered an asset.
- Documented experience from working in an IMS programme country is considered an asset.
- Documented experience of conducting evaluations of programmes/projects funded by any of the following donors: NMFA, Sida, Danida, and/or the EC is considered an asset.
- Fluency in English, language skills from any of IMS programme countries is considered an asset.

○ **Consultant(s):**

- Minimum Bachelor of Arts degree in any of the following subjects: social sciences, journalism, law, economics, international relations, or equivalent.
- Documented thematic experience of media development and support; The experience can be, but not limited to, experience from work in the field of media development and support and/or with international platforms and networks engaged with media development and support; having conducted relevant evaluations and studies; or equivalent.
- Documented thematic experience of work on safety of journalists, freedom of expression or related incl. advocacy and/or coalition building.
- Knowledge and experience in applying a gender perspective to media work and/or gender sensitive MEL, an asset.
- Documented thematic experience of the localisation agenda, and the concept of decolonising aid, is considered an asset.
- Experience from working in an IMS programme country is considered an asset.
- Fluency in English, language skills from any of IMs programme countries is considered an asset.

The team shall preferably be gender balanced and have representation from one or more regions where IMS work. IMS will reward any bidder who meets these requirements.

Upon the request of IMS, the bidder/team shall be able to prove its compliance with any of the requirements listed in this paragraph through references, referees, copies of previous assignments, certificates of performance, or equivalent.

9. Selection criteria and bid evaluation process.

A combined scoring method will be employed, where the qualifications and technical proposal will be weighted 75 % combined with the financial proposal which will be weighted 25%. The financial proposal will be evaluated with a weighted scoring approach, where the lowest priced bid will be rewarded the maximum score of 25 and the remaining bids will be scored in relation to the lowest priced bid.

The bids will be evaluated according to the following scoring matrix:

Award criteria	Weight	Score
Technical criteria	75%	75
Bidder's capacity (20 points)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented experience of conducting evaluations of development aid programmes/projects following OECD/DAC (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions, or the equivalent previous version of the guidance. 		4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented experience of having conducted at least three evaluations, within the last six years, of programmes/projects funded by any of the following donors: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA); Sida; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark – Danida; the European Commission (EC) - <i>The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</i>, or its equivalent predecessor. 		3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented thematic experience within the field of media development and support. The experience can be, but not limited to, having conducted relevant evaluations and studies, compiled reports, papers and/or other academic or non-academic studies relating to media development and support. 		7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented experience in using various methodologies and tools for gender sensitive MEL. 		2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented thematic experience of the localisation agenda, and the concept of decolonising aid. 		2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented experience from IMS programme countries. 		1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to present written and oral information in English. 		1
Team members (30 points)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leader (14 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Master of Arts degree in any of the following subjects: social sciences, journalism, law, economics, international relations, or equivalent. 		2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 10 years of documented experience of conducting evaluations of development aid programmes/projects following OECD/DAC (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised 		3

<p><i>Evaluation Criteria Definitions</i>, and the equivalent previous version of the guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documented thematic experience of media development and support; The experience can be, but not limited to, experience from work in the field of media development and support and/or with international platforms and networks engaged with media development and support; having conducted relevant evaluations and studies; or equivalent. ○ Documented experience in using various methodologies and tools for gender sensitive MEL. ○ Documented thematic experience in the localisation agenda, and the concept of decolonising aid, is considered an asset. ○ Experience from working in an IMS programme country is considered an asset. ○ Documented experience of conducting evaluations of programmes/projects funded by any of the following donors: NMFA, Sida, Danida, and/or the EC. ○ Fluency in English. ○ Language skills from any of IMS programme countries is considered an asset. 		3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant(s) (14 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum Bachelor of Arts degree in any of the following subjects: social sciences, journalism, law, economics, international relations, or equivalent. ○ Documented thematic experience of media development and support. ○ Documented thematic experience of work on safety of journalists, freedom of expression or related incl. advocacy and/or coalition building. ○ Knowledge and experience in applying a gender perspective to media work and/or gender sensitive MEL, an asset. ○ Documented thematic experience of the localisation agenda, and the concept of decolonising aid, is considered an asset. ○ Experience from working in an IMS programme country is considered an asset. ○ Fluency in English. ○ Language skills from any of IMS programme countries is considered an asset. • Team diversity (2 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ team is gender balanced. ○ team has representation from any of the regions where IMS operates. 		2 3 3 2 1 1 1 1 1 1
<p>Proposed methodology and approach (25 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understanding of the requirements as defined in the Terms of Reference. ○ Appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed approach and methodology. 		10 10

○ Appropriateness of suggested time-line.		5
A. Price	25%	25
TOTAL		100