Impact Framework for Media Projects

Toolkit

Impact Framework for Media Projects

[International Media Support (IMS)](#) designed the impact framework as an integral part of [the Local Media for Democracy (LM4D) programme](#) that was co-funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium that included the European Federation of Journalists, Journalismfund Europe, Centre of Media Pluralism and IMS. LM4D ran from February 2023 to July 2024.

The impact framework assisted 42 media partners from 17 EU member states in planning and implementing their projects effectively within LM4D's tight timeline of six to seven months and in maximising their project's impact on the participating media outlets and their target audiences.
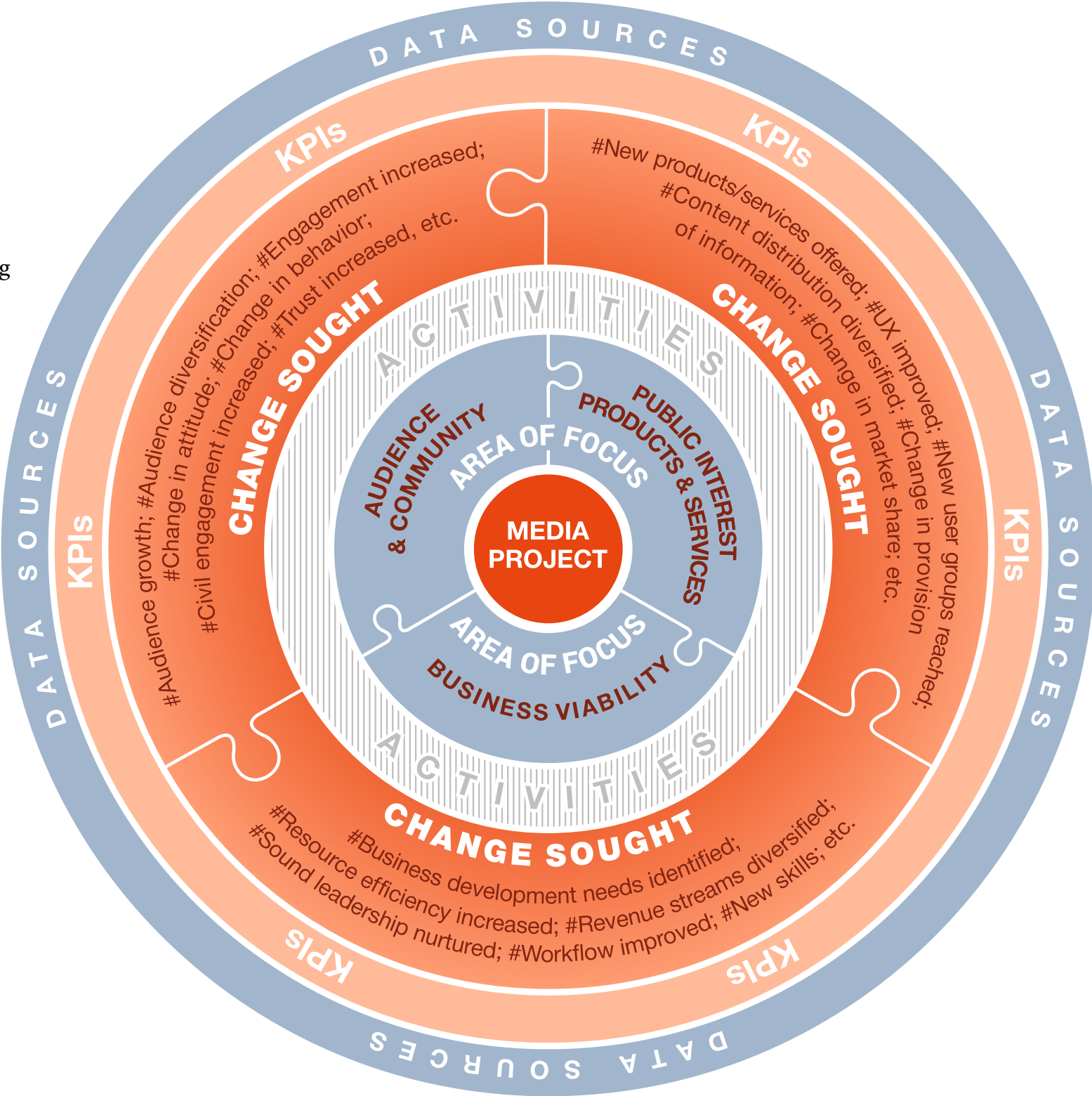
The impact framework is a set of tools and guidelines that helps to define targets for, track, and assess the impact of activities under the supported media projects in a clear and organised way; it can also be used for other media projects. Its methodology embraces a user-centric approach, links project activities to key performance indicators (KPIs) and outcomes, and helps to identify and collect data from the beginning to the end of the projects. The impact framework also allows the programme's media outlet teams to assess risks, track projects' progress towards established targets and, if necessary, correct their course in a timely fashion.

The impact toolkit includes:

- Hypothesis Statement Template
- Hypothesis Statement Guide
- Impact Measurement Worksheet
- Impact Measurement Worksheet Demo
- Impact Guide

IMS Impact Model

Impact is a measurable change resulting from project activities in one or more areas, including the targeted audiences and communities, planned public interest products and services, and the business viability of participating media organisations.

DATA SOURCES

KPIs

CHANGE SOUGHT

#Audience growth; #Audience diversification; #Engagement increased; #Change in attitude; #Change in behavior; #Civil engagement increased; #Trust increased, etc.

#New products/services offered; #UX improved; #Content distribution diversified; #Change in market share; etc. #Change in provision of information; #New user groups reached;

CHANGE SOUGHT

ACTIVITIES

AUDIENCE & COMMUNITY
AREA OF FOCUS

PUBLIC INTEREST PRODUCTS & SERVICES

MEDIA PROJECT

AREA OF FOCUS
BUSINESS VIABILITY

CHANGE SOUGHT

#Business development needs identified; #Resource efficiency increased; #Revenue streams diversified; #Sound leadership nurtured; #Workflow improved; #New skills; etc.

I.   Impact Hypothesis Statement

The impact measurement process begins with the formulation a project's hypothesis statement, which is a summary of for what, for whom and why each project is being carried out. The hypothesis forms the outline of the impact plan, which traces whether the intended change occurred or not. Each project hypothesis statement should be specific, contained and manageable. If a project has several objectives and activities, it is appropriate to create two or more hypotheses.

Impact Hypothesis Structure

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GOOD JOURNALISM | BETTER SOCIETIES

Fill in the blanks to improve your thinking about your project from the user perspective.

Our
Enter text here
content / product / service

will
Enter text here
change sought

for
Enter text here
audience / user segment

by
Enter text here
verb e.g. reducing, avoiding a user pain

and by
Enter text here
verb e.g. increasing, enabling a user gain

We will track our progress
Enter text here
e. g. your goal in terms of KPIs

by using
Enter text here
data sources

*The LM4D Impact Hypothesis Structure was developed from Strategyzer's Value Proposition Template and the Solutions Journalism Network's Impact Tracking Guide

Hypothesis Statement Guide

This guide contains examples of media products and services and of relevant user pains and user gains, as well as demos of hypotheses for media projects.

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Hypothesis Statement Guide

Examples of products and services:

- New website
- Subsection on existing website for new geographical or topic area
- Network of local (investigative) journalists
- Content series
- New formats: video/podcast/multimedia
- App
- E-newsletter
- New content distribution channels, i.e. social media
- Marketing campaign to reach out with new audiences or grow existing audience
- Public events: town hall debates/lectures/workshops/trainings
- Reader or member club
- User Generated Content module
- Crowdfunding, etc.

Examples of user pains:

- Feeling left out
- Not knowing what is going on
- Wasting time
- Feeling frustrated
- Feeling overwhelmed with information overload
- Not knowing who to trust
- Nothing of interest to me, etc.

Examples of user gains:

- Benefitting from new content to make informed decisions
- Having new access points to information
- Feeling more able to do something
- Making new contacts or friends
- Being interested to take part in local life
- Feeling more connected
- Feeling less stressed about missing out
- Consuming information on a most convenient device and time, etc.

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Examples of hypotheses statements

Example 1 (first draft)

Our

newsletter

content / product / service

will

better inform

change sought

for

women who live in Mir

audience / user segment

by

reaching them and saving them time and reducing the feeling of not having their information needs met

verb e.g. reducing, avoiding a user pain

and by

delivering it weekly in their mailbox

verb e.g. increasing, enabling a user gain

We will track our progress

aiming for 100 new female subscribers in two months and 50% opening rate

e. g. your goal in terms of KPIs

by using

mailchimp database statistics and a subscriber survey

data sources

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Example 2 (improved)

Our

new section on the website

content / product / service

will

provide original local content

change sought

for

citizens in Nitra

audience / user segment

by

reaching them and reducing frustration about the lack of coverage of their own area

verb e.g. reducing, avoiding a user pain

and by

publishing daily news updates, weekly column with local feature stories and monthly event calendar

verb e.g. increasing, enabling a user gain

We will track our progress

creating 100 original pieces of content produced by local reporters or citizen journalists and monitoring their engagement rate

e. g. your goal in terms of KPIs

by using

audience surveys, content and engagement metrics on Google analytics

data sources

II. Impact Measurement Worksheet*

Once a hypothesis statement is formulated, the project teams should complete an impact measurement plan. The impact measurement worksheet includes the hypothesis statement as a cornerstone, a list of main activities, descriptions of affected groups, the changes sought for each group, and a data measurement plan. The later helps to assess what data is already being tracked and is available as benchmark base, set KPIs, identify what new information needed to be collected, plan data collection logistics, and estimate the resources needed to collect new data.

IMS also developed an impact guide with examples of changes sought, KPIs and data sources for each key focus area and a demo version of an impact measurement worksheet, which project teams could draw on for inspiration and reference.

Your Impact Framework

1. Key Acvitivies	2. Affected Groups	3. Change Sought
What are your activities? i.e. what does your product or service consist of?	**Which groups will be affected by these activities?**	**How will these groups be affected? What changes do you hope to see?**

Add more rows or split cells if needed

Your Measurement Plan

4. Current Status	5. KPIs	6. New Data
What data do you have already? Have you already got systems set up for collecting relevant information? e.g. analytics, surveys, interviews, research, etc	**Which indicators will you use to capture and measure changes?**	**What new types of data (quantitative and qualitative) will you need to collect? Will you need for this?**

Add more rows or split cells if needed

7. Logistic	8. Challenges
What are the key actions to collecting data and carrying out related analysis? Who in your organisation will be responsible? What is the timeframe within which data will be collected and the related analysis carried out? i.e. start date - end date	**What are the main challenges you can foresee in collecting this data? Both internal to your organisation and external. How do you plan to mitigate against these risks?**

Add more rows or split cells if needed

* The impact measurement worksheet was developed from the Future News Pilot Fund, which sought to identify and showcase innovation withing public interest news in the UK, and test the ground future investments

Impact Measurement Worksheet Demo

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Impact Framework Demo E-NEWSLETTER FOR WOMEN OF MIR

Hypothesis statement

> Our E-newsletter will better inform women who live in Mir by reaching them, saving them time, and reducing the feeling of not having their information needs met and by delivering it weekly in their e-mail box. We will track our progress aiming for 100 new female subscribers in two months and 50% opening rate by using mailchimp database statistics and a subscriber survey.

Your Impact Framework

1. Key Acvitivies	2. Affected Groups	3. Change Sought
What are your activities? i.e. what does your product or service consist of?	**Which groups will be affected by these activities?**	**How will these groups be affected? What changes do you hope to see?**
Production and distribution of a weekly E-newsletter for women of Mir: • Conduct audience and market research • Form production team. Develop concept, format, length, name and visual style • Develop landing page with subscription form • Create Mailchimp account and choose plan • Create marketing and promo plan • Launch E-newsletter • Produce and deliver E-newsletter weekly • Analyze performance. Conduct subscriber survey • Fine tune E-newsletter	25-55 years old women living in Mir	Women of Mir receive information on topics important for them and in a convinient format > They are aware and more engaged with local news and developments > Greater engagement with the media >Greater feeling of satisfaction with information provision > Increased feeling of belonging to a community. **Women of Mir feel that their voices are heard and their interests/needs are taken into account.**
	Editorial team of the media outlet	New audience group identified > New product developed and launched > Editorial team acquired new skills > New content distribution and communication channel is added > Media receives feedback from subscribers > Media understands audience needs better > Media services its audience better > Team gets a feeling of purpose and satisfaction > **Media outlet is more sustainable.**

Impact Measurement Worksheet Demo

Your Measurement Plan

4. Current Status	5. KPIs	6. New Data
What data do you have already? Have you already got systems set up for collecting relevant information? e.g. analytics, surveys, interviews, research, etc	**Which indicators will you use to capture and measure changes?**	**What new types of data (quantitative and qualitative) will you need to collect? Will you need for this?**
• Mir's demographic data • 70% of web-users are female (Google Analytics) • 40 female followers on FB group	• Audience profile created • Results of marketing campaign • Number of E-newsletters produced • Number of E-newsletter subscribers • Number of female subscribers and their age groups • E-newsletter opening rate • Level of audience engagement with content • Level of audience satisfaction • Human resources & time spent on E-newsletter production • Level of satisfaction of editorial team	• Results of audience and market research • Number of views, likes, shares of social media posts/ads • CTR (click through rate), CPS (cost per subscriber) • Mailchimp analytics • Subscriber survey • Feedback from subsrcibers: emails, comments, suggested topics/news, posts on social media • Media outlet's internal documents • Interviews with team members

7. Logistic	8. Challenges
What are the key actions to collecting data and carrying out related analysis? Who in your organisation will be responsible? What is the timeframe within which data will be collected and the related analysis carried out? i.e. start date - end date	**What are the main challenges you can foresee in collecting this data? Both internal to your organisation and external. How do you plan to mitigate against these risks?**
• Assign a person who will be responsible for data collection and analysis. Grant this person with access to Google Analytics, Mailchimp, social media accounts **When*:** Start of project **Who:** Clare • Organize bi-weekly data review meetings for E-newsletter production team **When*:** Throughout project **Who:** Iryna • Design subscriber questionnaire and conduct two surveys **When*:** Middle and end of project **Who:** Iryna & Clare Track resources and time spent on E-newsletter production **When*:** Throughout project **Who:** Iryna • Conduct interviews with E-newsletter production team members **When*:** End of project **Who:** Clare • Analyze all collected data (quantitative and qualitative), present & discuss with the team **When*:** End of project **Who:** Iryna & Clare	• Data sources do not provide sufficient data for E-newsletter performance analysis. <u>Mitigation:</u> Identify and use alternative data collection methods and tools • Data collection process is overwhelming and takes too much time. <u>Mitigation:</u> Automate data collection, if possible OR Improve data collection design and adjust the plan accordingly • Low response rate to subscriber surveys. <u>Mitigation:</u> 1) Include call for action in several issues of E-newsletter; 2) Write individual emails to E-newsletter subscribers exaplaining why their participation in the survey matters.

*In your Impact Framework Worksheet, include real dates

Impact Guide

Examples

Focus Area	Change Sought (Pick & mix)	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Data Sources
AUDIENCE UNDERSTANDING, & COMMUNITY BUILDING	**ON AUDIENCE & COMMUNITY** ▪ Growth in audience reach ▪ Audience growth in targeted segment ▪ Audience diversification ▪ Increased audience engagement ▪ Audiences seeking out more information solutions to, a challenge highlighted ▪ Change in attitude ▪ Inspired members of your audience to be involved in public life ▪ Increased civil engagement ▪ Inspired audience members to take action such as participate in protests, demonstrations in person, or online ▪ Improvements in language, topic or geographical coverage for target groups ▪ Positive impact on an individual/source of a story ▪ Change in minority representation ▪ Increased awareness in topics ▪ Increased conversation influence ▪ Increased community connection ▪ Audiences feel less isolated and have a greater sense of belonging and shared experience ▪ Increased trust in news organization(s) as a source of information ▪ Policy change	▪ Audience profiles ▪ Audience research results ▪ Digital analytics (number of users/page views/conversions, etc.) ▪ Digital analytics on audience demographics (geo/gender/age, etc.) ▪ Levels of audience engagement (comments/likes/shares/bookmarks) ▪ Number of followers on social media accounts ▪ Number of members in SM groups ▪ Number of subscribers to E-newsletter ▪ Number of members/paid subscribers ▪ Number of participants in public events, organized my media outlet ▪ Levels of audience participation in content creation (i.e. number and quality of user generated topics and content) ▪ Representation of young people, women and / or minorities in media partners' stories (digital analytics data, number of publications, number of expert/ speakers/protagonists, etc.) ▪ Diversity of media staffing vis-à-vis audiences media outlet is trying to reach ▪ Examples of media outlet adapting story telling to needs / interests of audience based on findings from audience research (link to content production)	▪ Google Analytics ▪ Social media platforms analytics ▪ CMS analytics ▪ Available audience research (i.e. #Gemius, sociological data, etc.) ▪ Audience research by media outlet (surveys, polls, interactive formats, etc.) ▪ Social media listening ▪ Interviews and focus groups ▪ Reader feedback ▪ Internal records of media outlet ▪ Recordings, minutes, and analysis of public/community events ▪ Research and reports by state institutions ▪ Research and reports by think tanks and NGOs ▪ Research and reports by international organizations ▪ Analysis of content produced by media outlet ▪ Monitoring of coverage in other media

Impact Guide

	ON MEDIA ORGANISATION ▪ Increased knowledge and skills in audience research methods and tools ▪ Deeper understanding of audiences and their needs ▪ Your media enhanced its knowledge on digital technologies and tested different approaches to engagement of audiences ▪ Increased knowledge and understanding about users ▪ Increased ability to debate and generate a shift in public conversation ▪ Audiences feel more connected to your media ▪ #Increased data on market		
PUBLIC INTEREST PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	▪ New products and services developed and launched ▪ User experience improved ▪ Increase in subscribers ▪ New user groups reached ▪ Content distribution channels diversified ▪ New formats developed and launched (multimedia, video, podcast, etc.) ▪ Change in quantity and quality of content on underserved topics ▪ Two-way communication with users established ▪ Editorial processes and workflow automated	▪ User needs analysis ▪ Producing a minimal viable product (MVP) or prototype ▪ Product testing ▪ Product iterations/pivoting ▪ Number of users of new products and services ▪ Number of downloads (for apps) ▪ User engagement with new products/services ▪ Level of user satisfaction with new products/services ▪ Number of new distribution channels ▪ Number of new formats produced and distributed ▪ Number of content pieces on underserved topics	▪ Results from user needs research (i.e. user surveys, interviews, etc.) ▪ Results from MVP trial ▪ User data and other stats from apps and other products/services ▪ User feedback ▪ Google and social media analytics ▪ Internal records of the media ▪ Content analysis ▪ Market research data ▪ Market monitoring and analysis ▪ Monitoring of other media

Impact Guide

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- Change in rural provision of news and information
- Change in minority language provision
- Change in urban provision of news and information
- Change in % market share of the media within local regional or national provision
- Change in provision of critical information needs
- Change in number of journalists covering underserved topics or areas
- Change in a community's ability to access quality news and information #Change in practice at a newsroom #Change in practice across a group of newsrooms/media
- Change in the supply distribution chain (distribution companies and professional Point of Sale) services to the local media market, i.e. number of press points of sales, press distribution companies and people working in the local press distribution sector
- Extent to which media content reflects its public interest values
- Media amplification

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- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of user communication/feedback
- Number of references or republications in other media
- Examples of content virality in social media
- Citations or links to content
- Market analysis results
- Examples of how media articulates its public interest values and put in place ways of applying them in story telling and business operations

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Impact Guide

BUSINESS VIABILITY AND RESILIENCE			
	▪ Robust mission, vision, values are formulated ▪ Media organization identified its business development needs and priorities ▪ Project ideation and development ▪ Effective financial planning and target use of core funding ▪ Effective financial management ▪ Improved understanding of position in the market place ▪ Increased resource efficiency ▪ Increased revenue diversification ▪ Innovative income generating activities developed and tested ▪ Increased audience contribution to media income sources ▪ Improved workflows ▪ Nurture sound leadership ▪ Select and deploy effective media management fundamentals ▪ Operate functional digital security ▪ Change in gender balance in staffing ▪ Change in financial support from local regional or national sources to independent media ▪ Change in structural financing mechanisms or funding sources ▪ Change in available commercial revenues ▪ Change in safety conditions for journalists ▪ Change in professional standards or control mechanisms ▪ Levels and networking between partners within or outside of formals events	▪ Strategic and policy documents are developed and applied ▪ Market analysis is done and used to develop new strategies ▪ Business plan ▪ Annual budget ▪ Revenue models and plans ▪ Time or cost savings due to new tool deployment ▪ Generated revenues ▪ Leadership training conducted ▪ Staff structure ▪ Level of staff satisfaction with their roles/jobs/compensation, etc. ▪ New relationships formed and progress made against plans for joint action ▪ Existing relationships strengthened ▪ New content sharing activities ▪ Collective actions or decisions taken ▪ Partnerships created and new levels of communications and networking	▪ Organizational records and documentation ▪ Financial and accounting documentation ▪ Meetings minutes ▪ Staff interviews ▪ Existing management models