

Navigating instability

A five-phase approach
to supporting exiled media

A programme briefing

April 2025

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Publisher

IMS (International Media Support)
April 2025

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IMS (International Media Support) is a nonprofit organisation supporting local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. We push for quality journalism, challenge repressive laws, and keep media workers of all genders safe so they can do their jobs.

Peaceful, stable societies based on democratic values rely on ethical and critical journalism that aims to include, not divide.

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About this briefing

Founded in 2001, International Media Support (IMS) works where public interest media is at greatest risk: in countries experiencing armed conflict, humanitarian crises, rapid political change or authoritarian rule.

These risks can be so great that media outlets are forced to relocate all or part of their operations away from their home countries because of persecution and threats to their security and survival. Yet they remain essential providers of public interest journalism to audiences back home.

With this increasingly happening to media outlets partnering with IMS in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East and North Africa, we set out to share learning from across our programmes to see:

- What does and does not work well when it comes to supporting “exiled media”, and
- How IMS and other media development agencies can sharpen our support.

This briefing paper is primarily for media development programme managers, but it will be of use to the media development sector more widely, with the recommendations directed to media development agencies and funders.

The briefing refers to “exiled media”, but usually these outlets are hybrid operations, parts of which continue to operate in their home country while others are based in a host country (see ‘Key terms’ section and a discussion of these terms in ‘Things to keep in mind’).

Between January 2023 and October 2024, IMS’ Journalism Hub (“J-Hub”)¹ convened our working group of IMS colleagues with specific expertise and experience in support to exiled media. Our group oversaw and participated in a series of workshops and studies that also involved exiled media – both partners and non-partners (see ‘How this briefing paper was collated’). Studies by other media development organisations, some undertaken during this same period, also informed our learning.

Most of these studies have focused on understanding the immense challenges that exiled media face. While always mindful of these, our goal is to seek solutions and, where possible, to turn those challenges into opportunities.

Our approach was framed by IMS’ Global Strategy for 2024-28, which has three main areas of strategic focus:

- Public interest content and media business viability
- The safety of journalists, of content producers and of media
- Policy, laws, regulations and public interest technology (PIT)

We looked at IMS’ support to exiled media under each area of strategic focus and how this support could be strengthened. This briefing starts by summarising the main takeaways from our learning exercise, any gaps in the support – including in our own – that the media development sector provides to exiled media and recommendations for closing these gaps through our programming.

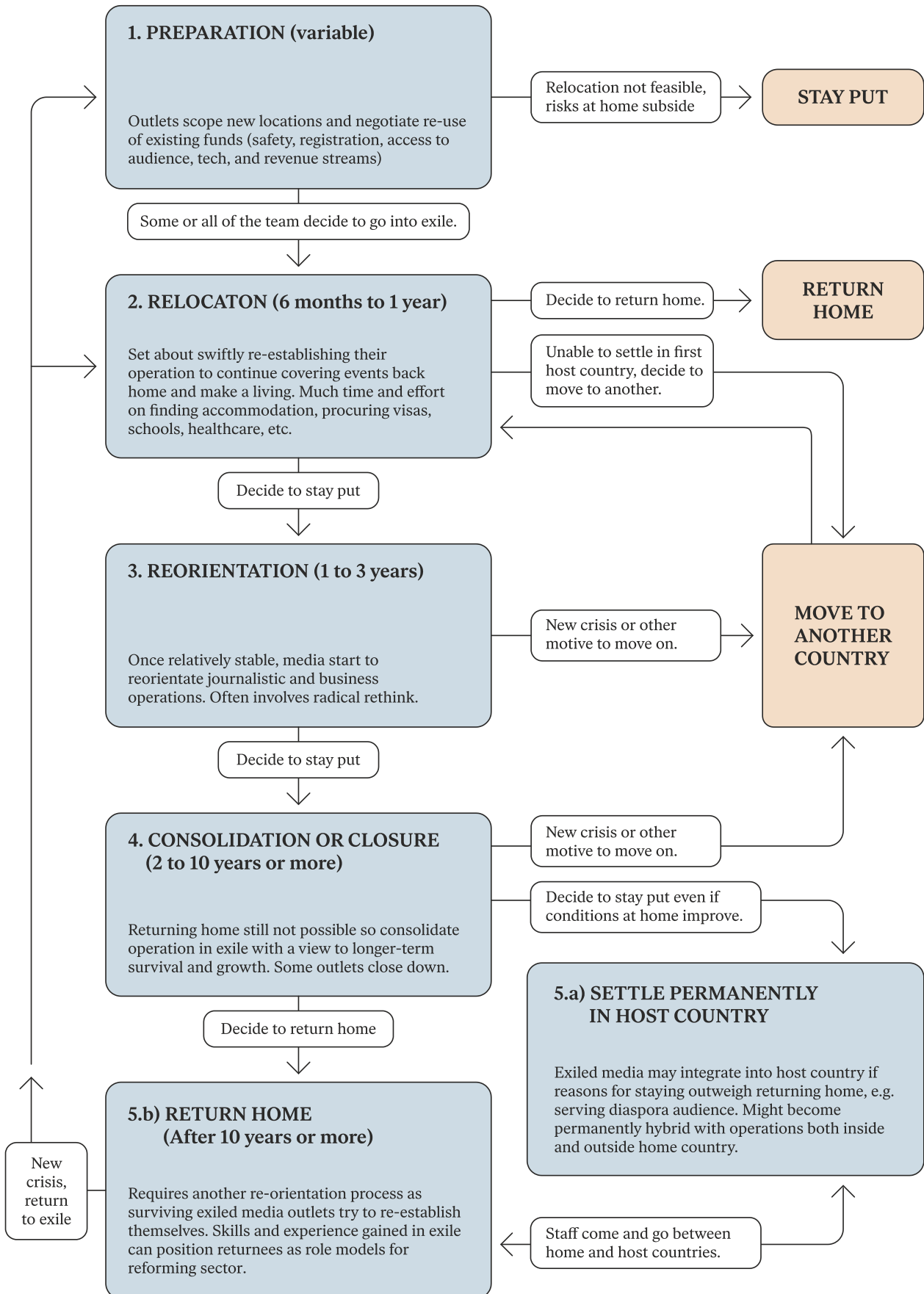
The briefing then presents the ‘IMS framework for supporting exiled media’ assembled from our findings. This framework describes five phases that media appear to go through during their journey from deciding to leave their home country to either returning home or permanently settling in their host country; a journey that invariably has many twists and turns (see diagramme).

Each phase is illustrated by an example of a media outlet in that phase. These case studies focus on outlets’ business and revenue models, given that making ends meet is the most pressing challenge faced by our exiled media partners. The framework then outlines the support IMS programmes can provide to partners during each phase. The framework section is followed by an overall conclusion and a description of our methodology.

The IMS Exiled Media Working Group
2025

¹ A crosscutting knowledge unit within IMS, which spreads expertise between programmes, shares insights and facilitates learning that can inspire the organisation to innovate.

Coming and going: The fluid phases of exiled media



Key terms

Business model: a multi-component framework for how a media outlet operates, where the revenue model is one part of its overall business offer. Key aspects are value proposition, channels, market position, partners, revenues, and customers. This reflects an outlet's **business strategy**, which is a roadmap for how management and staff will achieve the outlet's goals and assess its progress.

Business viability: refers to the capabilities on the business side of media operations at the organisational level and requirements of running those over time.

Core funding: money – usually in the form of grants – that an outlet can use to pay for ongoing operational costs such as staff salaries, rent, and utilities, as opposed to funds that are tied to specific projects or activities ('**project funding**').

Crisis preparedness: the process of thinking through and planning how to respond to major events that threaten an organisation, in order to survive them.

Digital security: measures and practices to protect a person's or an organisation's online identity, communication, data and information from unauthorised access, surveillance, and censorship.

Exiled media: media outlets that are forced to relocate all or part of all their operations from their home country because of persecution and threats to their security and survival. Invariably, exiled media run **hybrid operations** (see below).

Exit strategy: a plan for a party or parties to withdraw from a project, either once the project has met its objectives, or when it becomes clear that the project will not meet its objectives, or when a party can no longer be involved in the project. An exit strategy should cause minimal disruption to those involved in the project and avoid undermining what may have been achieved already. It should allow maximum transparency so everyone involved in the project knows where they stand and can prepare as well as possible for a party's withdrawal.

Funding: the actual money provided to a business or project to enable it to operate. Funding represents money received from donors, investors, or crowdfunding campaigns.

Financing: the process of acquiring money to support a business' operations, expansion, or investments – essentially the methods and strategies a company uses to secure the money it needs to achieve its objectives. Financing is usually provided by banks, financial institutions, and private investors.

Hybrid operation: in our context, this refers to a media outlet that runs a part or parts of its organisation from different places, wherein some operate from outside their home country while some still operate within its borders.

Income stream: a sustained and recurring source of income into a business, such as membership fees, subscriptions, advertising, and services. One-off sources may include a time-specific crowdfunding campaign.

Journalism: the practice of gathering, analysing and presenting fact-based news and information to the public (see also 'public interest journalism' below).

Media viability: a field within the media development sector that focuses on the enabling economic conditions and resource implications that affect media organisations. It is a systems approach.²

² [The Media Viability Manifesto](#)

Public interest journalism: ethical, editorially-independent, fact-based journalism that informs the public about key issues in ways that serve the public interest rather than any political, commercial or factional interest; encourages and contributes to public debate; holds those in power to account; and challenges discriminatory societal norms.

Public interest media: editorially-independent media outlets that strive to produce and distribute public interest journalism.

Public interest technology (PIT): Digital infrastructure – every aspect of the chain that makes it possible for people to access content on the internet, both physically and technically, as well as in terms of ownership computer, from software and protocols to cables, servers, communication towers to telecom companies, social media platforms, search engines and app stores - that intentionally serves the public interest. It is designed to be inclusive, diverse and non-discriminatory as well as open, transparent, accountable and user-centric in ways that give users full control over their personal data, their content and interactions and facilitate the production and dissemination of public interest content.

Resilience: a media outlet's ability to adapt in the longer term, particularly in the absence of universally-applicable or permanent solutions but with strategies for withstanding shocks.

Revenue model: the overall configuration of incomes that make up the financial resources of the business. The revenue model refers to how news media generate money, but this is only one part of the firm's broader business. The revenue model is a core element of the business model as revenue streams and cost structures allow operations to keep going.

Sustainability: the ability of media organisations to continue their activities and endure over time, producing public interest journalism in the medium-to-long term.

Background

Since IMS' launch in 2001, the number of its media partners forced to flee their home countries and operate from elsewhere has steadily increased. Initially, these 'exiled media' tended to be started by individuals or small groups of journalists in exile. However, in recent years, cohorts of existing IMS partners – often comprising most or all a country's public interest media – have relocated to other countries to avoid persecution and closure at home. This trend looks set to continue.

For example, between 2000 and 2005, many of Zimbabwe's most experienced journalists went into exile along with civic and political activists and millions of other compatriots fleeing political persecution and economic meltdown as the country's ruling party clung to power. As a result, the IMS Zimbabwe programme would eventually support media partners in three continents.

Similarly, staff at most of the media outlets that mushroomed in the wake of Syria's democratic revolution in 2011 were among the millions of Syrians driven into exile when the country descended into civil war. In this case, all IMS Syria Programme's media partners were subsequently based outside the country, either in neighbouring Turkey or in the European Union. At present, most are contemplating returning home following the fall of the regime that had caused them to leave.

Following a military coup in February 2021, most of Myanmar's emergent public interest media were forced into exile almost overnight, along with members of IMS' programme team. Among those relocating to neighbouring countries were media outlets which had formed in exile during previous decades of military rule and then returned to Myanmar during the intervening period of democratisation. At around the same time, most of Belarus' vibrant public interest media were forced to flee their country as the government clamped down on civil society and opposition political parties following demonstrations against disputed elections in 2020.

IMS expects this trend to continue, with exiled media becoming the main – and, in some cases, only – source of public interest journalism for audiences in more and more countries. Along with the likely reduction in development assistance by some of exiled media's main funders, this situation calls for a more strategically coherent and creative response from IMS and our colleagues in the media development sector. This briefing paper tries to provide an initial framework for this.

Things to keep in mind

The IMS Exiled Media Working Group's analysis – of what has worked well in the organisation's support to exiled media over the past two decades – points to the following considerations for **programme teams** to keep in mind when designing and implementing their interventions.

Strategic considerations

There is a light at the end of the tunnel

The hope is that exiled media partners will either return home eventually to play an important part in the transformation of a previously restricted media ecosystem, or that they will become an integral part of their host country's media. As we will see, these transitions can take decades, with media partners experiencing setbacks along the way. Our premise is that exiled media, along their journey, remain a valuable and often-scarce source of public interest journalism for audiences inside the home country and in the diaspora.

Are we a hindrance or a helping hand?

We should regularly stop and ask ourselves this question. Exiled media spend much time, effort and money accommodating the varying requirements of individual media development agencies and their donors. This can divert outlets and their leaders from the already complicated and stressful core business of producing public interest journalism and trying to make ends meet. Just as programmes have shown great flexibility in helping exiled media to leave their home countries, similar flexibility is needed when helping media partners to re-establish and consolidate their operations in their host countries. Programmes may need to adapt financial and administrative procedures, to make these less onerous and time consuming for media partners, while maintaining transparency and accountability to back donors. This may require programme managers to negotiate with their finance teams and back donors if these procedures risk becoming counterproductive. Coordination between media development agencies is also essential, particularly when media outlets receive support from more than one media development agency and/or donor. Ideally, coordination should extend to media development agencies and donors agreeing a common strategic approach and a joint plan for their support to each partner. This should make support more coherent and streamline liaison with, and reporting by, our media partners.

Mutually beneficial networks and alliances

Coordination and collaboration between exiled media has also proven effective when serving their common interests and needs. Exiled media can derive considerable strength from belonging to networks and forming partnerships. In one country where IMS worked, exiled media reconstituted associations that had been formed in their home country to share knowledge and address common challenges with each association taking responsibility for different tasks. They also opened co-working spaces and organised social events in cities with a high number of exiled journalists. However, competition for scarce resources and mutual suspicion among exiled media arising from their insecure and volatile circumstances – can deter cooperation and coordination. While the financial sustainability of individual media outlets remains a primary concern for partners, they also recognise that collective advocacy is necessary to strengthen the long-term sustainability and resilience of their media sector.

No need to reinvent the wheel

Many of exiled media's needs are similar – albeit more acute – to those of public interest media based in-country, allowing IMS and other media development agencies to adapt existing strategies, methods and tools to support exiled media. Exiled journalists and media outlets find opportunities to innovate and professionalise in ways that media in a home country might not. This means exiled media have a lot they can contribute to the transformation

of the media sector in their home country when the time is right. Furthermore, exiled media can assist longer-term efforts to reform a country's media policies and laws, even if the short-term prospects for such changes are limited.

'Exiled' vs 'hybrid' media

'Exiled media' implies that a media outlet is outside its home country and 'looking in'. Some IMS partners are uncomfortable with this term – particularly as many have parts of their operations based inside their home countries – and thus prefer the term 'hybrid media'. However, 'exiled media' is widely used and changing this may affect donors' perceptions of IMS' partners. Some donors may have an embargo on funds being spent inside particular countries. Therefore, IMS' use of the term 'exiled media' recognises that these tend to be hybrid operations and that IMS' support to exiled media partners is usually geared to helping them maintain a hybrid set-up and to build bridges between their audiences often scattered far and wide.

Viability

Most exiled media remain highly dependent on donor funding because the circumstances under which they operate make it too difficult to generate enough income from other sources. Therefore, we need to be realistic about how much revenue exiled media can generate and what media development assistance can achieve with support to outlets' business operations. We should focus on making sure exiled media outlets can continue to serve audiences both inside and outside their home countries with quality, public-interest journalism. Nonetheless, running effective operations that can generate and manage a diversity of revenue is an important part of this, even if most outlets' main source of income is likely to be from grants. Managing expectations about viability includes exiled media clearly identifying their added value and orientating their operations to raise and manage grant funding without compromising their vision, mission, values, and ability to generate other forms of income.

Audiences and revenues

We spoke with members of exiled media who have gone to great lengths to reach and engage successfully with their distant and diffuse audiences yet they still struggle to monetise this reach. The challenges of reaching their audiences are exacerbated by the diminished control outlets have over the relocation of their distribution channels, as well as the differing and sometimes conflicting expectations and requirements of donors and media development partners when it comes to measuring audience reach and engagement.

Business models

Exiled media outlets find themselves torn between commercial and non-commercial business models. On the one hand, they rely on donors who usually fund non-profit organisations only; on the other hand, exiled media try to generate revenue from commercial source and must register and operate as businesses. The visions, missions, and values of exiled media outlets are their guiding star for navigating all the uncertainty they face. Adaptability is key to their survival and requires flexibility and long-term core funding from their media development partners.

Mental well-being

The mental well-being of exiled media leaders and their staff impacts their ability to survive the various phases of exile. Exiled media personnel experience enormous pressures because of their heightened vulnerability, particularly as they move to/reorientate in their host country. IMS staff have experienced similar pressures, particularly when forced to relocate unexpectedly. Providing psychological support to journalists, editors and media managers is important for preventing or overcoming burnout and has become an important component of IMS' safety work. Exiled media leaders we spoke with seemed to take mental health seriously, initiating individual and group counselling when they can, often with the help of IMS and other media development agencies.

Programme management

Crisis preparedness

“Hope for the best, plan for the worst” seems to be the mantra both for exiled media and those supporting them. The funding and other support provided by IMS and other media development agencies works best when flexible and responsive to the ever-changing needs of individual partners. This requires ‘crisis preparedness’ – having in place contingencies for crises, planning ahead, and remaining vigilant for signs that something is going wrong (see next section for more details). Crisis preparedness makes crisis management less fraught for all involved.

Types of exiled media partners

IMS has identified two types of exiled media partners:

- Start-ups that are still building their journalism and organisational capacity.
- Long-term partners who have already developed their capacity.

Long-term partners still experience staff turnover, particularly in exile, so have a recurring need for new staff to be trained in the basics. Therefore, ongoing capacity development is important for both types of partners and must be adapted for their different settings and needs. It is useful to have someone in-country who acts as a bridge between mentors, trainers, and media partners. These ‘point people’ help mentors and trainers to understand the participants and their context.

Recommendations for addressing gaps in support

The IMS Exiled Media Working Group's analysis of the IMS experiences since its formation in 2001 points to the following gaps in the media development sector's approach and recommends how **media development agencies and their donors** might address these gaps in future.

A common approach

Gap: the media development sector lacks a coherent strategy for supporting exiled media. As a result, and when they desperately need consistency and stability from their allies, exiled media partners often spend a lot of time, effort and money trying to juggle the various and sometimes conflicting demands of different donors and media development agencies.

Recommendation: media development agencies identify and agree shared objectives, strategies, streamlined procedures, and a joint plan for pooling resources when more than one agency is working with a cohort of exiled media. This should make it easier for exiled media to manage our support in an effective and transparent way, particularly during the 'preparation', 'relocation' and 'reorientation' phases of exile, as outlined later in this briefing. 'Crisis preparedness' – having in place contingencies for crises, planning, and remaining vigilant for signs that something is going wrong – should make this level of coherence and coordination more achievable.

Flexible, longer-term funding

Gap: adaptability is key to an exiled media outlet's survival and requires flexibility and long-term funding from media development partners. Funding should allow a media partner to plan, to pay for core costs such as salaries, and other ongoing operational expenses that make up much of a media outlet's costs. Funding should also offer flexibility in spending. While media development agencies are often credited by partners for their flexibility, longer-term funding is often lacking once outlets have relocated to their host countries and the funding that cushioned this transition runs out.

Recommendation: media development agencies and their **donors** identify and agree:

- Shared objectives and strategies and a common set of metrics for measuring strategic outcomes
- A joint plan for pooling resources, as suggested above.
- Streamlined financial and administrative procedures that reduce the need for media partners to satisfy multiple reporting requirements

To be transparent about how funding and other support to exiled media is raised and allocated, **media development agencies** and each media partner should then agree on the following criteria for inclusion in their contracts and terms of reference:

- The progress the partner wants to make in relation to the overall impact media development agencies and donors are striving for.
- How this progress should be measured and assessed.
- How and under what circumstances support may be phased out ('exit strategies').

By working more closely together in this way, **media development agencies** might be able negotiate with **donors** for more flexible and longer-term funding.

Gender dynamics

Gap: roughly equal numbers of men and women were involved in the studies and workshops that inform this briefing, while our interviews with exiled media leaders involved more women than men. Yet we found out little about the gender dynamics of exiled media and how these should be addressed.

Recommendation: media development agencies and researchers should be more explicit about what we want to find out about these dynamics and design such studies and interventions accordingly.

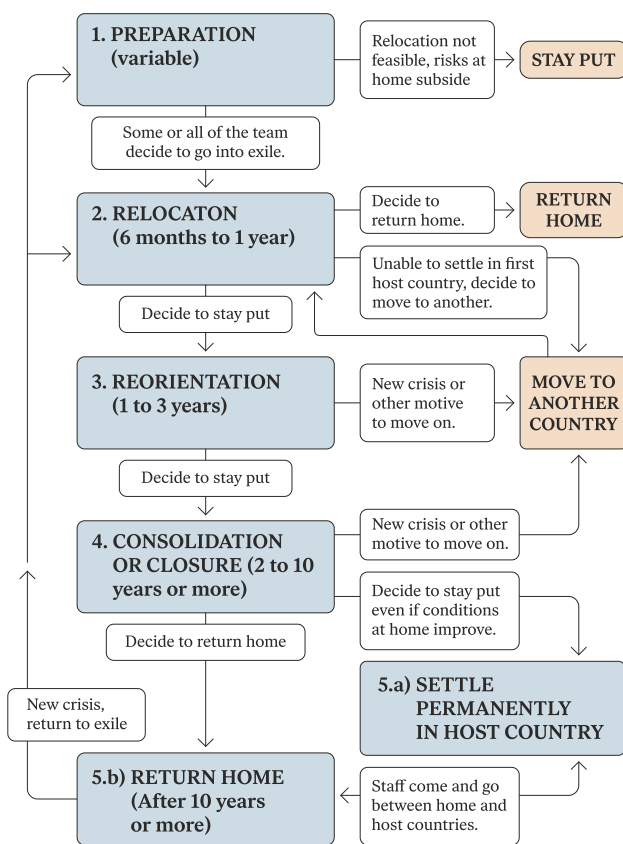
The pressures of leadership

Gap: members of exiled media take their mental health very seriously. But there seems to be little or no training to help the leaders of these outlets shoulder the double responsibility that comes with managing both their colleagues and their own uncertainty and stress, particularly during the relocation and reorientation phases of exile, as outlined in the next chapter. Women leaders we spoke with seemed more up-front about these pressures than their male counterparts, who said little on the issue.

Recommendation: media development agencies build leadership mentoring and training into their support to exiled media partners and ensure this provides leaders with the time and space to explore ways of managing the pressures that come with running an exiled media outlet. Facilitating mentoring or peer support – from other media leaders with experience of exile – might help. This may involve adapting such help to the differing needs of women and men media leaders.

International Media Support: A framework for supporting exiled media

This section details a framework for supporting exiled media that was assembled during workshops and interviews involving IMS programme staff, advisors, and partners. It is based on the participants’ extensive experience of/ expertise in exiled media.



This framework comprises the following:

- A description of five phases media appear to go through, between deciding to leave their home country and either returning home again or permanently settling in their host country: **Preparation, Relocation, Re-orientation, Consolidation** and **Return/Settle**. The various ‘routes’ through these phases are illustrated in the accompanying flow diagram.
- A real-life case study of an exiled media outlet in each phase.
- An outline of the support IMS programmes can provide to media partners during each phase. These areas of support are arranged under each of the three strategic focus areas in IMS’ Global Strategy for 2024-28.

Phases of exile

A media outlet’s journey through the five phases of transition and evolution, as described in this section, is seldom straight forward. For example, having relocated and started to reorientate themselves in one country, an outlet may then choose or be forced to relocate to another host country. New crises often occur, undoing an outlet’s reorientation or ‘consolidation’ in a host country. Some IMS partners have returned home, only to be forced back into exile a few years later.

Therefore, these phases of exile are reference points rather than a definitive road map. The timeframes (in brackets) for each phase are rough estimates based on the experience of IMS programmes and partners but will vary from case to case. An exiled media outlet’s journey is determined as much by the personal circumstances of individuals involved as by external factors. Our real-life case studies will illustrate each phase and must remain anonymous for safety reasons.

Phase 1: Preparation (lasting from one day to several years)

The better prepared an outlet is, the smoother its transition to a host country seems to be. With enough warning and foresight, an outlet can spend months or even years preparing to relocate, while scoping the suitability of potential host countries in terms of:

- Legal and financial frameworks – visa and company registration requirements, laws governing the media, tax regimes, the regulation of money transfers, and access to funding and financing.
- Access to audiences afforded by different countries’ digital and physical infrastructure, such as Internet connectivity and transport links.
- Digital and physical safety and security issues – potential host countries’ relationships with hostile regimes; agreements between technology companies and potential host governments on the interception and monitoring of digital communications.
- Existing support structures – established diaspora communities, media and support organisations that might help an outlet to relocate and settle.
- Lifestyle and affordability – the cost of living, access to health and education.

However, an outlet may also need to leave their home country at a moment’s notice, in which case relocation can be much more traumatic and haphazard.

Either way, IMS and other media development agencies play a pivotal role in facilitating an outlet’s transition by funding relocation costs through emergency funds or by allowing outlets to use existing funds to reach and settle in a host country. We can also put partners in touch with people and organisations who can help them relocate. The extent to which programme teams are privy to partners’ plans to relocate will likely depend on levels of trust and the risks that relocation poses.

Programme teams may often see the warning signs before partners do, because of IMS’ experiences from other countries and its links with organisations that monitor media freedom. An escalation in violations of media freedom is usually an early indicator that civic space is starting to close.

Some partners may be reluctant to discuss relocating and may even be in denial about the prospect of it. But the term ‘crisis preparedness’ keeps cropping up, not least because a lack of preparedness can put huge physical, psychological, and financial strains on both partner and programme teams.

Even if partners are unwilling or unable to plan for possible relocation, IMS programmes can still think through how to respond if partners and programme teams must relocate. They may be able to set aside contingency funds and liaise with in-house teams or other organisations that specialise in supporting media during emergencies.³

One dilemma media outlet leaders face is how to maintain cohesion and trust within their teams and with their audiences. One leader says that while preserving trust is essential for an outlet’s longer-term sustainability, this is difficult when team members are scattered across different countries and continents. Exiled media outlets often rely heavily on citizen journalists in their home country, who invariably operate undercover. An outlet may have to recruit and train these correspondents, which becomes difficult when members of the team are in exile. The more that leaders can address these issues before going into exile, the more stable their coverage will be once they relocate, allowing them to focus on numerous other practical challenges (see ‘Relocation’ and ‘Reorientation’ below).

³ For example, IMS’ [Rapid Response Mechanism](#) provides urgent support to media during emergencies.



CASE STUDY PHASE 1

At the time of our interview, this outlet's editor was based in the home country but had been preparing to relocate for two years because of growing political tensions. The government was planning a law that would prevent the outlet from receiving funds from outside the country. The outlet was already running a hybrid operation with seven of its 17 staff members based abroad.

"We face a permanent sense of worry and remain on high alert, particularly when we undertake investigations. We started providing psychological support to individual journalists but since last year we have needed a therapist for the whole team. We meet twice a month for group therapy and it works."

To prepare for relocating, the outlet had:

- Scoped potential host countries and identified one most suited to their relocation, particularly in terms of laws and financial regulations.
- Registered the company in the most suitable country and opened a bank account.
- Set up their Internet domain and web hosting in another country; looked at any agreements – between social media companies and the potential host government – that might compromise the outlet's privacy and security.
- Briefed current donors about their plans. Although the donors do not consider the potential host country a priority, the outlet's editor says they do seem willing to continue their support.

The outlet aimed to reduce its dependency on donor funding, but the editor says grants account for 88 percent of their income. Their most lucrative commercial revenue stream has been producing communication materials and campaigns for international organisations. The biggest challenge facing the outlet is how to pay colleagues who remained in the home country, as receipt of any money from overseas might result in political persecution. However, the editor also sees relocating as an opportunity to expand the outlet's audience and its income – both grants and commercial revenues. Their intended host country also offers tax breaks to non-governmental organisations and the outlet is considering registering as an NGO.

"Most of the media in our country are not prepared to go to exile, so we will be a very important actor for other media to learn from. One thing our lawyer has told us is to prepare for the worst but expect the best."

Phase 2: Relocation (6 months to 1 year)

Relocating to another country is an immense decision that may take considerable time. Journalists usually leave their home country in small numbers over time. They may end up scattered between different countries and continents, depending on personal circumstances. But their focus is usually on returning home as soon as possible.

In Myanmar, however, the sudden coup in 2021 and the extent of the military regime's subsequent crackdown meant that IMS' media partners relocated *en masse* along with members of the IMS in-country programme team. Similarly, many of IMS' Syrian media partners congregated across the border in Turkey but then moved to another country where conditions were more favourable. Similarly, the speed at which the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021 meant that many journalists left at very short notice and are now scattered around the world.

Once they leave their home country, media usually set about re-establishing their operation as soon as possible as they want to continue covering events back home. They also need to make a living. On top of figuring how to do this in a foreign country, exiled media workers need to find somewhere to live and work. At the same time, they must sort out their personal immigration status. Finding schools and arranging healthcare for family members may be another high priority. All of which requires navigating unfamiliar regulations and bureaucracy. Individuals forced into exile have little time to process and come to terms with the trauma and upheaval they and their families have just experienced. Media leaders and their staff may think the situation back home will soon change, allowing them to return. This makes medium and long-term planning difficult, and exiled media are often in a state of limbo and crisis management.

IMS programmes might assist existing partners to leave their home country, involving the [IMS Safety Fund](#) where necessary. When a crisis such as a coup or a natural disaster hits, IMS usually sets up a crisis management team to support programmes, and [IMS' Rapid Response Unit](#) may be called in to provide additional support. Once partners reach their host country, programme teams may put partners in touch with media organisations, lawyers, NGOs, and counsellors.

Responding to partners' rapidly changing needs requires a lot of flexibility. Existing partners will likely need to spend funds on things that were not initially budgeted for, and this can involve renegotiating funding terms with donors. Individuals working for partners may also require psycho-social support. The more programmes that can pre-empt and prepare for this, the better.



CASE STUDY PHASE 2

Not long after establishing their online news service, this outlet's founder and colleagues had to flee their home country at short notice, relocating to different parts of the world offering sanctuary.

Having reached their host country, the founder registered the outlet with help from an existing funder. This took time because the outlet did not have some of the documentation required in the host country. Meanwhile, another funder helped to open a small office from where the founder liaised with members of the dispersed team who continued to report on events back in their home country.

"We really need a structure and strategy. We want to rebuild the brand and we have a lot of gaps in our organisation right now."

The outlet struggled to secure new grants and relied on funds from a crowdfunding campaign that tapped into publicity surrounding the political upheaval back home. The outlet also sold stories to a media outlet in the host country, with whom the outlet had worked before relocating. However, at the time of our interview, these funds were running low.

The founder says it took time to build relationships with new funders on top of everything else:

"I have been working 78 hours per week. It is too much but I must think about how to keep us going to support journalists back home, where it is now completely difficult for them to work. I also have to do the editorial work and find stories, although fund raising is now the most difficult part of my job."

Nonetheless, the founder says that since the outlet's relocation, its audience has doubled – largely through social media – with people in approximately 100 countries now accessing the outlet's website. And yet this increased reach had not resulted in much additional income.

Phase 3: Reorientation (1 to 3 years)

Once settled and relatively stable in their host country, exiled media start to reorientate their operations. This often involves a radical rethink of how they produce and distribute their journalism, engage with their audiences, and generate income.

Journalists may be working remotely, often in different countries. Exiled media usually have correspondents in their home country who need to be protected and trained. They must experiment with new formats, having been cut off from established distribution channels.

They may also have to focus on new audiences, particularly if it is difficult to reach their traditional audience back home. Communities of fellow exiles may be a new audience segment to consider. All of this has major implications for how exiled media generate income through advertising, sales, and subscriptions, while their eligibility for grant funding may also have changed.

Exiled media tend to rely heavily on grants from existing funders during this period. Invariably, they must find ways to operate more efficiently, particularly as their costs may now be a lot higher, while also adjusting workplace policies and practices to suit the new circumstances of staff members. While their focus is on adjusting to their new environment, a lingering sense that they will soon be able to return home can make long-term planning difficult.

IMS programmes respond by sourcing experts who can help partners make these changes in their journalism and business operations: mentors, trainers, audience researchers, process facilitators, and other IMS partners with relevant experience and expertise. Programmes may need to provide exiled media partners with more core funding to cover the drop in advertising and sales. IMS might also liaise with donors on behalf of partners, while individuals working for exiled media may still require psycho-social support.

Partners and IMS programmes should both expect new crises to occur, either within individual outlets (such as a funding crisis or personal problems faced by staff members) or in their host country (such as political unrest or a natural disaster). Given how vulnerable partners already are, these new crises may have a considerable impact, which can be mitigated if partners and programmes plan ahead. As one exiled media leader says, with the benefit of hindsight: “Prepare for the worst, hope for the best.”



CASE STUDY PHASE 3

Founded in 2012, this outlet had to close in their home country because of political pressure. Having regrouped outside the country, the now-scattered team of 15 realised they could no longer continue producing their online magazine as the authorities back home were blocking their website. Many of their readers had also moved to other countries.

The outlet registered a non-profit organisation in the host country where most team members were now based and a separate commercial entity in another host country. This was to give the outlet the flexibility to generate both commercial revenue and grants. Almost overnight, the outlet went from being commercially viable to almost totally dependent on donors, as one of the co-founders explains:

“Until you are stabilised (in host countries), you don’t have capacity to think about how you change your business model. You are in survival mode. You are constantly in turbulence, as you are understanding yourself in a new market and a new legal system, so it is totally unrealistic to think about revenues.”

Much of the leadership’s efforts revolved around identifying and building relationships with potential donors and submitting funding proposals. This required a change of mindset among the staff and a different working culture:

“It took time to explain and change the mentality. It is quite different to running a commercial operation. Everything is new: how to operate and administer grants, who will be the recipient of the funds and how they will be distributed, implemented and reported on.”

To complicate matters, the outlet had to rehire most of its team on service contracts, which created additional costs on top of higher taxes and the need to innovate and develop new products. Meanwhile, different donors had different criteria for what they would and would not fund.

When we spoke with the co-founder, the outlet was two years into a three-year grant-funded project. This has created a degree of stability, but the co-founder is worried about the time and effort it would take to raise more funds while also producing journalism and running their operation.

Having relocated, the outlet had completely revised its strategy. With its website blocked to readers back home, the outlet now distributes stories through different social media platforms to reach and unite its fragmented and dispersed audience. This requires a completely different approach not only to the outlet’s journalism but also to its distribution and marketing. The outlet still has correspondents inside their home country, who work undercover as freelancers.

The outlet is part of a network of other independent publishers in exile, whose members work together on issues of common interest, such as creating a shared understanding of how best to measure and engage with their audiences. The outlets that relocated first are growing stronger, the co-founder says, while those who came later are still finding their feet – helped by the experiences of the former but still on a steep learning curve as each outlet charts its own path.

Phase 4: Consolidation or closure (2 to 10 years or more)

By the time they reach this phase, those working for exiled media have probably accepted that they will not be returning home as soon as they may have initially hoped and are now looking to consolidate their longer-term survival and growth in their host countries. As time goes on, some outlets close as funds dry up and/or key personnel move on to other things. As they settle in their host countries, some may begin to see their relocation as permanent, particularly if they are serving audiences in the diaspora that can sustain them.

During this consolidation phase, exiled media look to scale up the formats they experimented with during the previous phase, making the most of the relative safety and freedom of their new environment and the opportunities for training and exposure to new ideas that it may provide. Exiled media may look to establish and/or join networks that help them to survive and evolve.

However, while changes to their journalistic and business operations should enable them to diversify their income, exiled media are likely to remain heavily dependent on donor funding. This may start to dry up as donor priorities shift, and heightened competition for dwindling funds can make collaboration between exiled media difficult, even if it could be mutually beneficial to work together to serve their mutual interests: on joint stories, for example, or through shared marketing. During this phase, some exiled media outlets are likely to merge or close down.

Although this phase offers relative stability for exiled media, one editor advises: “Always be prepared for new crises.” This refers to a devastating earthquake that hit the region they had moved to. Such unexpected shocks would test any media outlet’s resilience, but exiled media are particularly vulnerable to new crises having had little time to build up the financial and emotional reserves needed to pull through. Therefore, crisis preparedness is a vital prerequisite of the support that exiled media partners receive during the Re-orientation and Consolidation phases. If possible, outlets must build up financial reserves that they can draw on in a new crisis.

IMS programmes also need to maintain their flexibility so they can respond to new challenges, as and when these occur. Since donor funding is likely to decrease the longer partners are in exile, programmes may have to prioritise support to some partners and stop supporting others. This difficult choice requires programmes to be transparent about how funds are raised and allocated and to have a shared understanding with each partner about:

- The progress the partner wants to make in relation to the results IMS is striving for.
- How that progress can be assessed.
- How support may be phased out (‘exit strategies’).

Diversification of funding and other income becomes increasingly important and programmes may continue to help partners raise grants from other sources and strengthen their business operations.

Helping partners to regularly revisit and iterate their editorial and business strategies should enable both media outlets and programme teams to pre-empt and navigate both the expected and unexpected twists and turns of phase four and the previous three.

As this phase continues, some outlets may begin to see their long-term future tied more to their host country rather than their home country, particularly as staff and their families put down roots. Outlets may find diaspora communities offer a path to long-term sustainability.



CASE STUDY PHASE 4

Civil war forced this media outlet to relocate to a neighbouring country four years after they had set up as a radio station – serving a predominantly rural part of their home country – with funds from a European media development agency. When civil war broke out, the station reported on human rights violations, prompting the authorities to outlaw it for siding with “foreign forces”.

Having relocated, the station’s journalists started broadcasting programmes back to their home country via shortwave transmitters and published stories on their website and social media pages. Two years after the outlet relocated, the authorities blocked access to the website inside the home country.

In exile, the outlet registered as a company and set about restructuring and professionalising every aspect of its operation, from journalism to finances and administration, with a focus on applying for grant funding. However, some donors were unwilling to fund a commercial entity, so the outlet also registered as an NGO – a lengthy and expensive process that involved appointing trustees from the host country. The outlet also commissioned audience and market research, with the latter concluding that the outlet could not make money, as the founding editor explains:

“Many companies (in our home country) are interested in advertising with us but they feel insecure because the government has accused us of being a foreign agent. Also, because of inflation and challenges the country experienced after the civil war, the economy is fragile and most companies don’t have a lot of money for advertising.”

Therefore, the outlet had little choice but to rely on donor funding. When we spoke with the founding editor, they had a team of 15 people based outside the home country and 23 freelance journalists inside it. Their current donors require the outlet to match five percent of their grant funding, which means generating USD 50,000 per year from other sources.

“Five percent is still too much so we are thinking about setting up a basket fund. Donors say they do not fund HR (staff) costs and yet these amount to 40 percent of our costs. We pay USD 25,000 per month for the short-wave transmitters, but shortwave is our niche because only around 20 percent of the population (in the home country) is literate.”

Meanwhile, the outlet is thinking of developing content specifically for compatriots in the diaspora, but the founding editor feels they need coaching to sharpen their business plan. The outlet struggles to establish how many people listen to their programmes on shortwave, although they can measure their online audience.

“It was very depressing to discover (from the market research) that we cannot make money, so we decided to at least be professional. We created our own vision and mission so we can answer that question of identity. We want our journalism to reflect who we are and to be proud of this. Adaptability is a key word for us. We have to adapt and be flexible or we will not survive. And we have needed to be resilient from the start.”

Phase 5: Return or stay? (10 years or more)

Eventually the situation back home improves and exiled media are safe to return. But not all media outlets choose to do so. Having been in exile for so long, some may have put down roots and found a niche within their host country.

Outlets that decide to stay in place will look to further consolidate their operation. They may focus more on serving the diaspora community, as audiences in the home country could now have better access to public interest media in-country, particularly if other exiled media return home. They may also continue as hybrids, with some parts of the operation still outside the country and others inside. This may be more feasible if personnel based outside the country are able to travel freely between the home country and their base.

Outlets that decide to return home face another reorientation process as they try to re-establish themselves in a country that may have changed dramatically since they left. Personnel may encounter some of the challenges they faced when they first went into exile: finding somewhere to live and work, as well as schools and health care for family members. Reintegrating into their home communities after such a long time may restimulate old traumas. Returnees may also meet resistance from those who stayed.

On the upside, returning media workers now have skills and experience that can make them role models for the rest of the media sector, at a time when political change in their home country may create a window of opportunity for reforming the media sector.

Former exiles became forerunners in Zimbabwe's community radio and vibrant online media scene, for example. The experience of exile can bolster journalists' confidence to drive innovation and push for reforms back home. Exiled media also set an example to other media of what public interest and accountability journalism entails.

Partners returning from exile are still likely to need core funding as they find their feet back home and re-establish their operations. IMS can help partners source the expertise to help them reorientate their content, audience engagement, and business strategies. Partners may also need support to deal with the psychological pressures that come with returning home after many years away.

Support is likely to focus on outlets that decide to return home; donors are likely to prioritise the opportunities presented by an improvement in the home country's political landscape. However, there may be grounds for continuing to support media outlets that decide to remain in their host country, particularly if these outlets continue to be an important source of public interest journalism for their audience in the home country, and/or they provide a vital service to diaspora communities. If there is a chance the situation in the home country could lapse back into autocracy, it may make strategic sense to support media operating both inside and outside the home country during a transition period.



CASE STUDY PHASE 5

The media outlet that illustrates this phase was formed in exile during the 1990s and returned to their home country more than a decade later, when the country moved towards establishing a multi-party democracy. Once home, the outlet grew to become one of the country's leading media companies with television channels, publications, and online news platforms employing more than 200 people.

Interviewed for this briefing, the outlet's managing director says they returned home with the deliberate intention to break their dependency on the international donor funding that had sustained them in exile:

"We told our donors and supporters, 'Thank you for all you did but we will now try to stand on our own two feet.'"

This was easier said than done. With most of the economy still controlled by the country's former autocrats and their supporters, the outlet tried to interest international investors but to no avail. Therefore, they borrowed money:

"It was a very big struggle. I had to put my mother's house on bond to get a loan from a private bank. Even a private bank was scared to loan us money, even with this deposit because they also had to work with the regime. But we succeeded."

The outlet generated more and more commercial revenue, particularly through advertising on its television channels and, to a lesser extent, social media. It also made money by providing clients with value added services, such as the production of public service announcements and other content. By 2020, the outlet had reached 'monthly break-even'. The managing director says, "That was the best moment."

But then the political situation deteriorated again and the outlet was forced to relocate parts of its operations to neighbouring countries. Advertising and other commercial revenue dried up overnight and the outlet had to turn to international donors for help once more. However, this time around the outlet is more of a hybrid operation.

"It's not that we are in exile. I've just come from the (home) country. We would see this situation as one foot in and one foot out. A lot of our personnel are inside the country. We go there regularly. We go in and come back."

However, this poses considerable risks to the safety of staff and audience members. The government has banned the outlet and controls much of the country's communications infrastructure, which restricts the outlet's broadcasts and other distribution channels. Furthermore, it is not allowed to register as media in its host countries and operates as a 'semi-legal' company offering services.

The managing director says that in the three years since relocating, the outlet has clawed back about eight percent of its income from "self-generated revenue" (donations from readers, social media advertising and production services for a few paying clients). The rest of its income comes from dwindling grants from international donors. Operating costs have been much higher since relocating, forcing the outlet to make considerable savings and embark on a process of drastic staff cuts.

"Yes, you need grants and friends. But you need to sustain yourself. We are very unsustainable now. Everyone has an agenda, even donors."

Support to exiled media in practice

Strategic support

Having identified these five phases of exile, the IMS working group looked at the support IMS can provide to exiled media during each phase (**see Appendix for details**). These findings are arranged according to the three strategic focus areas of IMS' 2024-25 Global Strategy: public interest content and business viability; the safety of journalists, content producers and media; and policy, laws, regulations, and public interest infrastructure (PIT).

Again, this is not a formula. A programme will tailor its support to the specific needs of their partners and the contexts they work in. The tables provide a range of options for programme teams to choose from and adapt. The types of possible support will likely change over time as we learn more.

Nonetheless, we find that programme support can be adapted to the framework's phases of exile in ways outlined in the tables and therefore the framework provides programmes with a basis for planning.

Programme cycle management

As is conventional in media development practice, IMS interventions follow a programme cycle and are usually determined by the duration of grants provided by IMS' own donors. In this programme cycle, the start and end of our support to exiled media partners depends largely on the circumstances surrounding individual partners and programmes. For example:

- Some exiled media become IMS partners having already relocated. Others may be existing partners forced to relocate during the implementation of an existing programme, as happened in Myanmar and Afghanistan following sudden changes in political regimes.
- Having relocated, exiled media partners may then be supported through multiple programme cycles. Each cycle may be designed to suit changing circumstances and donor requirements.

As we have seen, media partners can be in exile much longer than a programme funding cycle, which is relatively short term (usually between one to three years per cycle) compared with a media outlet's lifespan.

Ongoing support to exiled media partners assumes that IMS can raise the funding for consecutive programmes and that donors are willing to continue funding these partners. This makes it difficult for IMS and other media development agencies to commit to the kind of long-term support that most exiled media outlets need, which is why support programmes need exit strategies, as highlighted earlier.

Conclusion

If the global deterioration of free expression and other civil liberties continues, more public interest media are likely to find themselves in exile in the coming years. Our briefing paper tries to provide a basis for a proactive and concerted response from IMS and its colleagues in the media development sector.

The challenges exiled media face are not dissimilar to those faced by public interest media based inside their home countries, although exiled media tend to experience these challenges far more acutely. This allows us to adapt our existing support strategies and methods to the needs of exiled media rather than having to ‘reinvent the wheel’.

As the framework presented in this briefing shows, going into exile is the start of a cycle which eventually sees some media returning home. Long-term support to exiled media is therefore preparation for the day when their country’s civic space reopens enough for them to return and act as catalysts in the subsequent transformation of their media ecosystem.

But the journey does not end at that point. Surviving media outlets enter a new and similarly challenging phase of their evolution, which may even see them forced back into exile if the situation at home deteriorates again. Some of IMS’ partners are now in their second cycle of exile but are invariably stronger, more resilient, and certainly wiser than first time around.

The window of opportunity that allows media to return home – usually due to an easing of the restrictive political system that forced them into exile in the first place – tends to be brief and may open only after several years or even decades. If a media outlet’s departure is like a sprint to safety, supporting exiled media is more of a marathon that requires us to plan long-term.

Given the unpredictability and relatively short-term nature of the funding that IMS and other media development agencies deploy, we must adopt a phased, coordinated approach with transparent exit strategies along the way, as well as simplified, coherent, and robust procedures that minimise the burdens on already over-stretched media partners, without compromising accountability to our donors.

How this briefing paper was collated

This briefing paper comes from a series of studies and workshops led by a crosscutting unit within IMS called the Journalism Hub (J-Hub) and its Exiled Media Working Group⁴ between January 2023 and October 2024.

J-Hub started by surveying nine programme managers experienced in supporting exiled media and then convened an online workshop for survey respondents to discuss the findings. On the workshop participants' recommendation, J-Hub then interviewed some of these programme managers in more depth and reviewed literature to:

- Map the support that IMS programmes and other media development organisations provide to exiled media partners.
- Identify opportunities for IMS programming and emerging solutions to the many challenges that exiled media partners face.

The subsequent internal report⁵ provided background to a follow-up workshop in Copenhagen in October 2023, during which members of the working group and some exiled media partners presented and discussed best practice and learning. The workshop identified priority next steps for refining IMS' support, while J-Hub produced an internal learning brief outlining the working group's findings to date. This included a first iteration of the framework for supporting exiled media.

Between January and October 2024, J-Hub conducted in-depth interviews with the leader of an exiled media in each of the five phases of exile in the framework (three women and two men). This was to:

- Test and validate the framework.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the business models and revenue streams of exiled media during each phase.

Further insights were also drawn from IMS' *Where Is The Money?* report which studies the various forms of funding, financing, and investment available to public interest media in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa.⁶

J-Hub also convened two more workshops with the working group – in May and October 2024 – to develop and refine the framework presented in this briefing paper. J-Hub then sense-checked the framework in meetings with the Nordic-Belarusian roundtable on Sustainable Digital Media in Vilnius on 19-20 September 2024 and IMS' Strategic Management Meeting on 30 October 2024.

⁴ The IMS Exiled Media Working Group comprised of IMS staff with experience and expertise working with exiled media. The group set out to gain an overview of IMS' support to exiled media and to reflect on what could be learned from past approaches, with a view to informing IMS' future support to exiled media.

⁵ 'Confidential briefing on exiled media and IMS, June 2023, by Mary Myers.

⁶ Cook C. (ed.) with Abbas H. and Goudineau A., Kabwato C., Warner J. and Aguirre L., and Settles R. (2024) *Where is the money? A global perspective on forms of funding, financing and investment for public interest media*. Copenhagen, International Media Support.

Appendix: IMS’ support to exiled media

The following tables present the support IMS can provide to exiled media during each of the phases described earlier. The support IMS can provide during each phase is arranged according to the three focus areas of IMS’ 2024-25 Global Strategy:

- public interest content and business viability
- the safety of journalists, of content producers and of media;
- policy, laws, regulations, and public interest technology (PIT).

Phase 1: Preparation (variable timeframe)

Journalists and media personnel assess risks and prepare for the moment they may need to leave. Going into exile is an immense decision, can take time, and some individuals may be reluctant to consider it. But the more prepared an outlet and its supporters are, the better.

Content and business viability	Safety	Policy, laws, regulations, and public interest technology (PIT)
<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can identify the most suitable host country and plan how they can best produce stories, access and engage with their audiences, and run their outlets once there.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help partners scope possible host countries’ legal and administrative procedures; access to infrastructure; audiences; funding and revenue. • Put partners in touch with trusted people to assist with registration, visas, finding accommodation, etc. • Put partners in touch with media outlets that have experience of setting up and operating from exile. • Support partners’ training of correspondents who remain inside the home country (see also safety training). 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can mitigate the risks to their safety and security while preparing for relocation.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate psycho-social support. • Facilitate crisis preparedness. • Facilitate partners’ access to a national safety mechanism (where one exists) and/or international support networks (when necessary). • Help partners assess risks of relocation and safety in host country. • Support safety training for team members who will remain in the home country, particularly newly recruited correspondents. • Plan for addressing safety and security risks to partners and programme teams during and after relocation. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Help alleviate political pressure on partners while they prepare for relocation and assess enabling environment within possible host country.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby international actors who can influence those threatening partners. • Help partners access legal defence in home country (if necessary) and identify legal support in potential host country. • Help partners assess legal, policy, and PIT environments in potential host countries.
<p><u>Applies across all strategic areas:</u> plan programme’s support for partners during and after relocation. Help partners negotiate with donors if necessary.</p>		

Phase 2: Relocation (6 months to 1 year)

Journalists and other media personnel usually leave their home country in dribs and drabs, although some may depart *en masse*. Once they have left their home country, exiled media usually re-establish their operation as soon as possible to continue covering events back home and make a living.

Content and business viability	Safety	Policy, laws, regulations, and PIT
<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can re-establish their operations in host countries as quickly and as smoothly as possible, while also addressing the personal needs of staff.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund and facilitate partners' set-up costs – registration, visas, tech solutions, and financial services. • Activate support networks in host country – other IMS partners/representatives, NGOs, media associations and unions, funders, etc. • Help partners fundraise. • Help partners access expertise to produce stories and re-engage with their existing audience once in host country. • Help partners to review editorial and business strategies. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can mitigate risks during relocation: staying safe, dealing with psycho-social pressures and securing safe passage to host country.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide partners with psycho-social support in host countries. • Help partners assess and address risks once in host country. • Ensure partners can access support from national safety mechanism in host country (where such exists) and/or those who can help them address safety risks. • Fund related costs, e.g. set up digital security. • Help partners take care of content producers in home country, e.g. safety training, securing communications. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Help alleviate political pressure on partners in host country and mitigate challenges posed by new environment.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help partners to assess and address opportunities and challenges in PIT in host countries. • Help partners access legal defence in host country, if necessary.

Phase 3: Reorientation (1 to 3 years)

Once settled and relatively stable, exiled media start to reorientate their journalism and business operations. This often involves a radical rethink of how they produce and distribute their stories, generate income and run their operations. Media outlets may decide to relocate to another host country if conditions in the first country chosen are not favourable or circumstances change.

Content and business viability	Safety	Policy, laws, regulations, and PIT
<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can adapt and stabilise their operations in their new environment. Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and – most likely – change their strategy, approach to journalism, and business model. Prepare for/respond to any new crises. <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide core funding and help partners secure other funding until their strategy and business models are revised/implemented. Build flexibility into funding so that partners can respond to any new crises. Facilitate partners’ review and revision of their editorial strategy and business model. Advise on and fund research and experimentation that informs partners’ new strategy, approach to journalism, and business model. Support organisational development that enables partners to reorientate their operation towards raising and managing donor funds. Help partners to source and fund bespoke mentoring and training that enables them to adjust to a new way of operating. Facilitate peer support networks related to partners’ needs. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can remain safe and respond to risks as they arise.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support partners to safeguard the physical, mental, and digital safety of staff, in particular correspondents operating inside the home country. Provide safety training to new staff joining partners in exile. Ensure partners can access appropriate, ongoing psycho-social support, as required. Continue to monitor and facilitate partners’ risk assessments and their links to local safety mechanisms in host country (where such exist) and/or those who can help partners to address safety risks. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can begin to identify opportunities for advocacy aimed at: Stabilising and improving their existing environment. Preparing the ground for a transformed media environment back home.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help partners to identify and assess their advocacy priorities. Initiate and support coalition building process(es) where relevant. Help partners to identify opportunities for improving PIT and to design projects to test these opportunities. Mobilise international support for partners’ advocacy objectives. Support research and analysis that contributes to partners’ advocacy objectives.
<p><u>Applies across all strategic areas:</u> Liaise with other donors about providing partners with appropriate, coherent, and flexible funding with a long-term timeframe. Help partners scope and relocate to new host country if another relocation becomes necessary, i.e. repeat Phases 1 and 2.</p>		

Phase 4: Consolidation or closure (2 to 10 years or more)

By this stage, those working for exiled media have probably accepted that they will not be returning home as soon as they had initially hoped and are looking to consolidate their operation in exile with a view to longer-term survival and growth. Some outlets may close. As they settle in their host countries, other outlets may begin to see their relocation as more permanent, particularly if they are serving audiences in the diaspora that can sustain them.

Content and business viability	Safety	Policy, laws, regulations and PIT
<p><u>Purpose</u> Media outlets that are of most value to their audiences and having the most impact can consolidate and, if possible, grow their operations, while IMS gradually withdraws from those with less potential. Partners implement and iterate their journalism and business strategies. IMS similarly reviews and adjusts its own programme strategies, focusing on supporting outlets with most potential and implementing gradual exit strategies for partners with less potential.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support partners' ongoing review and iteration of strategies, including crisis preparedness. Assist partners to identify their desired impact and to gather evidence to assess this. • Provide partners with advice, training, and mentoring related to the implementation of their strategies. • Support audience research. • Continue to facilitate partners' access to knowledge and peer support networks. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners remain safe and can respond when risks arise.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help partners to strategise on the safeguarding of staff and correspondents. • Provide safety training to new staff joining partners. • Help partners prepare for and respond to new crises. Provide support for crisis preparedness when in exile. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners scale up advocacy aimed at: Further stabilising and improving their existing environment. Preparing the ground for a transformed media environment back home.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue support to advocacy coalitions to address advocacy priorities aimed at creating enabling policies, laws, and digital infrastructure in preparation for possible change in the home country. • Fund coalitions' activities. • Provide research and analysis. • Scale up successful PIT solutions piloted in previous phase. • Source and pay for the technical expertise to draft policies and laws; design and test PIT solutions; negotiate with policymakers and technology companies. • Where possible and appropriate, facilitate dialogue between partners and decision makers with power to improve the enabling environment that partners seek. • Mobilise international support for partners' advocacy objectives. • Support research and analysis that contributes to partners' advocacy objectives.
<p><u>Applies across all strategic areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, provide flexible, long-term core support linked to partners' strategies that allows them to respond to new crises. • Phase out support to partners unable to make significant progress with their strategies and to generate the income they need for long-term survival. • Continue to liaise with other donors about providing successful partners with appropriate, coherent, and flexible long-term funding. 		

Phase 5: Return or remain? (10 years or more)

This phase starts when the conditions in the home country have improved enough for exiled media to return home. Surviving outlets that decide to return home go through another preparation and reorientation process as they try to re-establish themselves there. Media workers who have been in exile now have skills and experience to become role models for the rest of the sector that remained in the home country. Outlets that decide to remain in the host country may focus more on serving the diaspora community. However, outlets may also continue as hybrids, with some parts of the operation outside the country and others inside.

Content and business viability	Safety	Policy, laws, regulations, and PIT
<p><u>Purpose</u> Media partners who decide to return home can re-establish their media outlets in their home country and contribute to the opening and transformation of the media sector.</p> <p>Media partners that decide to remain in their host country can continue to consolidate and grow their operations as valued and respected providers of public interest journalism for their audiences.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to outlets that return home: • Facilitate partners' return home. • Support partners to review and revise their operational strategies in their home country. • If possible, provide partners with core support for their revised strategies and help them transition and re-establish themselves back home. This support is flexible enough to allow partners to respond to new crises. • Provide partners with advice, training, and mentoring related to the implementation of their revised strategies. • Support audience research. • Continue to facilitate partners' access to knowledge and peer support networks. • Support training of new journalists. <p>Support to outlets that remain in their host country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the review and revision of strategies that partners now adjust to the improved situation in the home country. • Continue to support partners' implementation of revised strategies, with particular focus on serving their audiences. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners who return home can assess and address their safety needs during relocation and reorientation back in their home country.</p> <p>Partners who remain in their host country remain safe and can respond if new risks arise.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help partners assess their safety needs back home. • Facilitate partners' access to local safety mechanisms in home country (where such exist) or the establishment of local safety mechanisms (if none exist). • Provide safety training to new staff joining partners back home. • Facilitate partners' access to psycho-social support to help them return and transition back home. 	<p><u>Purpose</u> Partners can realise their advocacy goals aimed at creating a more enabling environment for public interest media and their audiences in their home country.</p> <p><u>Possible support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue support to coalitions that advocate for enabling policies, laws, and digital infrastructure in preparation for possible change in the home country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund coalitions' activities. • Provide research and analysis. • Scale up innovative PIT solutions in home country. • Source and pay for the technical expertise to draft policies and laws, design and test PIT solutions, negotiate with policymakers and technology companies. • Where possible and appropriate, facilitate dialogue between partners and decision makers with the power to improve the enabling environment that partners seek. • Mobilise international support for partners' advocacy objectives. • Support research and analysis that contributes to partners' advocacy objectives.
<p><u>Crosscutting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to liaise with other donors about providing partners with appropriate, coherent and flexible funding while they re-establish themselves back home. • Help partners to continue to prepare for and respond to crises. 		

