

Assessing Qatar media landscape using UNESCO Media Development Indicators

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Background & Objectives:

The Doha Centre for Media Freedom (DCMF) will be conducting research to assess the media landscape in Qatar. To do so, DCMF intends to use a methodology developed by UNESCO referred to as the Media Development Indicators (MDIs).

The MDIs define a framework, within which the media can best contribute to, and benefit from, good governance and democratic development.

The MDIs comprise five categories of indicators that, together, provide an aspirational picture of the media ecology to be constructed in order to ensure freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of the media. Those indicators include: a system of regulation; plurality and diversity of media; media as a platform for democratic discourse; professional capacity building; and infrastructural capacity.

The MDIs are not intended as a tool to rank a country's level of media development against that of others. Instead, the indicators should be tailored and customised to fit the particularities of the national context in order to support the efforts of actors working in the area of media development, including policy makers.

Methods:

Collaboration, consultation and national ownership are key components to enhance the potential impact and local capacity of this project. To this end, DCMF will commission the research to a team of five Qatar-based researchers. The research group will receive training from a UNESCO expert on how to best conduct an MDI assessment. Simultaneously, DCMF will set up an Advisory Committee composed of the most notable stakeholders and experts in the field of media development in Qatar who will provide the research group with feedbacks and recommendations. The project will start in October and end in April 2013.

Results:

In addition to providing one of the first in-depth analytical studies of the media situation in Qatar, this research will guide the formulation of policy-related recommendations. The final report will be published as a book in Arabic and English. It is hoped that this book will serve as a public resource for universities, media outlets and research institutes in Qatar and, in the long-term, support Qatar's transition from a carbon economy to a knowledge economy.