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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للترقية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

## Internal Oversight Service Audit and Evaluation

IOS/2021

Original: English

# Terms of Reference Performance Audit of Communication and Information Sector

Version 6 July 2021



## 1. Background

In a global context marked by the digital transformation, UNESCO plays an essential role in harnessing communication and information for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work of the UNESCO Communication and Information (CI) Sector is, as per the 40 C/5 Programme and Budget, structured along two main lines of action (MLAs): 1) Fostering freedom of expression online and offline, promoting the safety of journalists, advancing diversity and participation in media and supporting independent media, and 2) Building Knowledge Societies through ICTs, by enabling universal access to, and preservation of, information and knowledge.

The first MLA includes the following three expected results (ERs):

1. Member States are enhancing norms and policies related to freedom of expression, including press freedom and the right to access information, online and offline, and are reinforcing the safety of journalists by implementing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity;
2. Member States have benefited from enhanced media contributions to diversity, gender equality and youth empowerment in and through media; and societies are empowered through media and information literacy programmes and effective media response to emergency and disaster;
3. Media development is strengthened, and Member States have improved monitoring and reporting systems, and these results are reinforced by external grassroots projects supported by the IPDC.

The second MLA includes the following three ERs:

4. Capacities of Member States strengthened, through the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, and of the Information for All Programme (IFAP), and the related normative framework
5. Member States have taken measures to promote universal access to information through open and inclusive solutions and innovative use of ICTs for sustainable development
6. Identification, preservation, access to and dissemination of documentary heritage have been strengthened globally and at the national level through the Memory of the World Programme.

In addition the CI Sector hosts the secretariat for two intergovernmental programmes: The Information for All Programme (IFAP), and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

Below is a budget overview for work of the CI Sector during the period 2018-21:

### **Budget synthesis**

Year	Regular Programme (RP) budget			Extrabudgetary (EXB) funds		Funding Gap	
	Current allocation	Expenditure	Additional appropriations <sup>[1]</sup>	Allotment as per Approved budget	Expenditure	Funding Gap	Funds mobilized
2018-2019	26,130,000	26,482,000	1,950,091	25,203,000	23,793,000	14,256,439	38,235,563
2020-2021	24,655,700	11,333,000 <i>(As at 31.12.20)</i>	829,000 <i>(For 2020)</i>	27,364,000	12,140,000 <i>(As at 31.12.20)</i>	16,869,000	20,163,383 <i>(For 2020)</i>

**Below are some examples of key achievements of the Sector in recent years as reported to IOS during the preliminary interviews:**

- With support from IPDC, capacities of Member States have been strengthened to improve the monitoring and reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.2 related to public access to information.
- The liberation of imprisoned journalists - the 2016, 2017 and 2018 laureates of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.
- In celebration of World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO through the FACTS media campaign highlighted the critical role of journalism in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Over 9,000 media professionals from over 160 countries have been trained on reporting of reliable pandemic-related information.
- Through the Judges Initiative, more than 17,000 judicial actors from over 60 countries and 3,400 law enforcement agents from over 17 countries have been trained on freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists.
- Creation of Global Media Defense Fund (GMDF) to support civil society initiatives for media freedom.
- Launch of the CodeTheCurve hackathon, a global, gender-inclusive initiative to empower young developers, scientists, and entrepreneurs to address COVID-19 through technological innovation and digital solutions.
- Capacities of media workers have been strengthened at 59 local radio stations in 10 African countries through the “Empowering Local Radio with ICTs” project.
- Improved access to information legislation in 15 countries across three regions (Africa, the Arab states and Asia and the Pacific) in accordance with international standards.
- Building digital skills in over 35 countries worldwide through the YouthMobile Initiative, with targeted action to benefit girls and young women.
- Development of an online software heritage archive enabling full access to the source code of more than 134 million software projects.

<sup>[1]</sup> Additional appropriations are already included in the current allocation amounts for RP budget.

## **Prior audits and evaluations**

In the period covered, UNESCO IOS has carried out five evaluations focusing on different areas of work of the CI Sector.<sup>1</sup> While IOS/AUD had not undertaken any full scope audit of the CI Sector, the External Auditors undertook an audit of the Sector in 2016, which concerned the management and activities of the Sector as they related to the biennium 2014-2015. In total, 15 recommendations were issued, two of which are still open with due dates in 2022.

### **2. Purpose and scope**

This performance audit has the following objectives:

- Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of UNESCO's CI Sector;
- Understand what works, why, and what requires improvement to better position the CI Sector to effectively respond to key issues of today e.g. Artificial Intelligence, digitization, social media regulation, etc;
- Analyse the role and performance of the two intergovernmental programmes: IFAP and IPDC and their synergies with the other CI sections;
- Analyse success stories/ cases and low performing cases for sector-wide learning, and highlight challenges in order to identify potential areas of improvement;
- Provide forward-looking recommendations for the future strategic direction and positioning of the sector, in particular in the context of the next Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and Programme and Budget (C/5).

The scope of the performance audit will cover the period from 1 January 2018 to 30 April 2021. Other periods may also be reviewed if necessary. The report will be issued to the Director-General and relevant Headquarters' Sectors and Services with a view to guide the future strategy of the CI Sector and improve programming and effective delivery.

### **Key Questions**

The performance audit will address key questions around the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency. Below are possible questions under each criteria. They will be adjusted and prioritized during the inception phase of the performance audit through consultation with the Reference Group.

#### **Relevance:**

The extent to which the overall objectives and strategy respond to global, country, and partner/beneficiaries' needs and priorities.

- To what extent does the CI Sector strategy as outlined in the current C4/ C5 address the priorities and specific needs of the programme, Member States, and partners?
- Is UNESCO focusing on those areas that are a priority for Member States:
  - a) Supporting freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists
  - b) Building media and information literacy through empowering citizens and youth with digital, media and information skills
  - c) Supporting the development of a free, diverse and gender-inclusive independent media
  - d) Promoting open access to information for all, supporting multilingualism and improving access to information for marginalized groups

<sup>1</sup> Notably the following corporate evaluations:

Evaluation of UNESCO's work in the area of media and information literacy (2020)

Evaluation of UNESCO's action to prevent violent extremism (2020)

Evaluation of UNESCO's work in information and communication technologies in education (2019)

Evaluation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication IPDC (2018)

Evaluation of UNESCO's action to revitalize and promote indigenous languages (2021)

Evaluation of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2021)

- e) Fostering innovation and an inclusive digital transformation in the service of sustainable development
- f) Protecting, preserving and promoting access to the world's documentary heritage and raising awareness of its relevance to sustainable development
- What is UNESCO's comparative advantage compared with other UN entities and key partners?
- To what extent does the CI sector, its projects and efforts address the global priorities of UNESCO with regards to Africa and Gender Equality?

### Coherence:

The compatibility of the programme with other programmes in a host country, sector, or institution.

- To what extent are the CI programmes consistent with the efforts of partners at national and international level? Are the interventions achieving synergies? If not, why?
- To what extent do the CI Sector interventions add value while avoiding duplication of efforts at Country level?
- Internal coherence and inter-sectorality: a) What is the level of horizontal engagement within the CI Sector? b) To what extent does the CI Sector take advantage of synergies and interlinkages with other UNESCO sectors?

### Effectiveness:

The extent to which the programme achieved its objectives, including any differential results across groups.

- What have been some of the most significant results, including at the outcome level, of the CI Sector since 2018?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the achievement of results? And what innovations has the Sector introduced in response to COVID-19?
- What have been the main enabling and hindering factors to achieving planned results?
- What unexpected results (positive and negative) have been achieved? For whom?
- Does the CI Sector have the necessary skills, knowledge and human/ financial capacities required to deliver the portfolio?
- Are Management roles and responsibilities adequately defined, understood, and discharged?
- Has a Results Based Management (RBM) system, and a Knowledge Management System (KMS) been established and implemented? To what extent are the available systems producing evidence that can be used to improve strategy and programming?
- Does the Sector have a robust and transparent resource allocation process in place conducive towards the achievement of expected results?
- To what extent has the CI resource mobilization strategy been effective?
- Is the donor base sufficiently diversified and sustainable to support the Sector in achieving its objectives?
- Do the strategies and outcomes of the IPDC and IFAP enhance the effectiveness of the Sector?
- What are the most important lessons learned since the re-structuring of the CI Sector which took effect in January 2020?

## Efficiency:

The extent to which the programme delivery is carried out in an economic and timely way.

- How efficient are the working relations between the sections and unit in the CI Sector, and between the two intergovernmental programmes? How can they be streamlined to ensure an efficient process?
- To what extent does the CI Sector management and field office structure support efficient implementation of the portfolio?
- How well have resources and risks been managed?
- To what extent can the sections/ unit demonstrate they complied with good financial and project management and procurement practices, policies, and procedures?
- Do the sections and units manage delays effectively and revise their plans accordingly?

### 3. Methodology

The performance audit will apply a mixed methods approach involving quantitative and qualitative data collection methods including the following:

- Desk review/ document and data analysis
- Structured and semi-structured individual / group Interviews
- Survey for staff/ partners (academia, donors, Member States, etc.)
- Debriefing workshop to discuss preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations prior to the finalization of the report
- Other

The specific methods will be further refined during the inception phase in consultation with the Reference Group. The methodological approach will give due consideration to the current global COVID-19 context and make sure to strictly adhere to relevant ethical, sanitary and data protection protocols. At this stage travel is not envisaged for this assignment but may be planned should the COVID-19 context allow.

Key data sources will include but are not limited to the following:

- recent decisions made by the Governing Bodies
- programme documents
- monitoring and reporting information
- donor and progress reports
- financial records
- communication products
- data from institutional information systems
- other

The joint engagement makes use of both Audit and Evaluation approaches and methodologies. It will follow the Institute of Internal Auditors' International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, available [here](#), and the IOS Audit Manual. These standards and policies require that the project be planned and performed in such a way as to obtain reasonable assurance that engagement objectives are achieved. The process will also apply UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation available [here](#).

The performance audit is expected to apply a gender responsive approach. This includes not only the use of participatory methods but also the disaggregation of data by men, women and by groups who are vulnerable and/ or discriminated against.

The data collection team will take measures to ensure data quality, reliability and validity of data collection tools and methods and their responsiveness to gender equality and human rights. The

limitations of the sample (representativeness) will be stated clearly and the data will be triangulated i.e. cross-checked against other sources to help ensure robust results.

#### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The performance audit will be managed by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) and will follow a hybrid approach i.e. led by a joint team of UNESCO audit and evaluation experts.

To complement the team, a consultant will be hired with experience in audit/ evaluation and subject-matter expertise in the CI Sector areas of work. The consultant is expected to provide external expert analysis and potentially advise on the strategic direction and positioning of the CI Sector. (S)he will contribute to data collection and data analysis, and to drafting parts of the Inception Note and the performance audit report. The external consultant will work 40 days on the assignment. The exact distribution of roles and responsibilities of the team members will be further specified in the Inception Note once the consultant has been selected. More information on the qualifications of the consultant are provided in the Annex of this TOR.

A Reference Group will be established which will consist of a mix of UNESCO staff both from Headquarters and from the field, and external members with a good knowledge of the CI Sector work. The purpose of the Reference Group is to facilitate the engagement of key stakeholders throughout the process and ensure ownership of the performance audit findings and recommendations. It is of utmost importance that confidentiality of information throughout the process be maintained by all participating members, and this includes, information emanating from discussions held and any information and documents shared and produced throughout the engagement.

#### 5. Deliverables and Schedule

The performance audit will take place between June 2021 and Jan 2022, the duration may be adjusted depending on the consultation process with the Reference Group and other requirements. The deliverables include the following:

1. **Inception note:** An inception note containing the following:
  - purpose and expected use of the performance audit, based on the desk study and preliminary interviews
  - detailed methodology including a data collection matrix, list of interview partners, interview guides, survey questionnaire(s) etc.
  - workplan with timelines
  - list of documents

The Inception note will be shared with the Reference Group for feedback.

2. **Draft performance audit report:** The draft report will be written in English, be comprised of no more than 30 pages (excluding Annexes) and follow the IOS template.

The draft performance audit report will be shared with the Reference Group for feedback.

3. **Final performance audit report:** The final report will incorporate comments provided by the Reference Group and not exceed 30 pages (excluding Annexes).

#### Draft Schedule

Activity / Deliverable	Date
Terms of reference	Mid June
Feedback from Reference Group	End June
Inception note	End July
Feedback from Reference Group	End August

Data collection and fieldwork	Sep Oct
Draft performance audit report	End Nov
Debriefing workshop	Mid Dec
Feedback from Reference Group	End Dec
Final performance audit report	Mid Jan

## 6. Adherence to the Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines

The joint audit and evaluation team agrees to adhere to the Code of Ethics as promulgated by the Institute of Internal Auditors<sup>2</sup> and to the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation<sup>3</sup>. Should a member of the team encounter any circumstances potentially impairing the adherence to the Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines at any time during the engagement, such as a conflict of interest, (s)he will immediately bring it to the attention of the Head of Internal Audit, Head of Evaluation Office and/or Director IOS. It is expected that the consultant who will be hired by IOS will also adhere to the Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines.

## 7. References (Key documents consulted)

- 209 EX/4.I.A Programme Implementation Report (PIR) (1 January 2018-31 December 2019)
- 211 EX/Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its 211th Session
- Communication and Information programme overview (UNESCO 2021)
- UNESCO 2018-19 39 C/5 Programme and Budget
- UNESCO 2020-21 40 C/5 Programme and Budget
- DG/Note/20/01 from 13 January 2020: Adjustment of the structure of the Communication and Information (CI) Sector at Headquarters
- 200 EX/20.INF.3 Audit Report on the Communication and Information Sector (CI)

<sup>2</sup> <https://na.theiia.org/standards-guidance/mandatory-guidance/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

## Annex: Qualifications of Consultant

### Mandatory qualifications and experience:

- Broad expertise in audit and/ or evaluation, with a minimum of seven years of professional experience in the field demonstrating a strong record in designing, conducting and leading audits and/ or evaluations;
- An advanced university degree and/ or working experience in at least one of the thematic area(s) covered by the CI Sector: freedom of expression and the right to information, knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age, innovative technologies and digital transformation, diversity of heritage and cultural expressions;
- Experience in gender analysis and gender in audit/ evaluation along with an understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality;
- Excellent language skills in English (oral communication and report writing).

### Desirable qualifications:

- At least good working language skills in French (reading and oral communication).
- Experience with assignments for the UN.

Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae and may include a reference check. Names, titles and contact details of three references should be provided as well as a web link to or electronic copy of one recently completed report with relevance to the assignment. It is mandatory that no team member has had any previous involvement in the development or implementation of the activities of the CI Sector.