

## Local media for democracy // Country-based questionnaire

### Context (independent variables)

1. What is the current size both in terms of land area (sq. km) and population of your country?

*Suggested sources: Please refer to the World Bank database for the most up-to-date and reliable data on land area (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2>) and population size (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>).*

2. Does a debate exist in your country regarding local "news deserts"? In other words, do policymakers, industry professionals and/or the general public recognise it as a problem and discuss it regularly?
3. Please list and rank the five largest cities in your country according to their population size. Additionally, if applicable, please provide the names of any inhabited islands located near the mainland, as well as any Outermost Regions (OMR) of your country.
4. Describe the hierarchical governance structure in your country starting from the smallest administrative territorial unit to the largest (i.e., national). Additionally, please describe how each administrative unit is elected.
5. Provide a brief overview of the legislative competence of each territorial unit hitherto mentioned, with a particular focus on the fields of culture, media and journalism.
6. Name and describe the largest minority groups (i.e., ethnic, religious, and linguistic) in your country (including minority groups that travel transnationally, e.g., Romani and migrants) and, if possible, specify their geographic locations. Additionally, please indicate whether these minority groups are legally recognized.
7. Does the legal framework (e.g., statutory legislation, case law, charters, bylaws, broadcast regulations etc.) in your country provide a definition for "local media" and "community media"? If "yes," please disclose the definition provided in the legal framework. If "no," please describe how "local media" and "community media" are typically defined in practice.
8. Can you provide a brief overview of the state and development of local media (including television, radio, press, encompassing both their online versions and online-only outlets) taking into account the unique historical context of your country?

9. **Can you provide a brief overview of the state and development of community media (including television, radio, press, encompassing both their online versions and online-only outlets) taking into account the unique historical context of your country?**
10. **If your country includes one or more of the EU's Outermost Regions (OMR), please provide a brief description of the situation for local media, specifically comparing it to the media landscape in the mainland.**

*For the definition of Outermost Region, please see: [Inforegio - EU & outermost regions \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)*

11. **Please state the GDP per capita – expressed in terms of national purchasing power standards (PPS) – for each NUTS2 region in your country and broadly indicate whether there are significant economic disparities between them. Please indicate whether the most economically deprived areas overlap with those identified as 'news deserts' in the previous questions.**

Please refer to the Eurostat database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eui.idm.oclc.org/eurostat/databrowser/view/tgs00005/default/table?lang=en>. It would be recommended to compare the GDP per capita across different NUTS1 and NUTS2 regions in your country. NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) is a geocode standard used by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, for subdividing the territories of EU member states and other countries for statistical purposes. NUTS2 regions are the second-level administrative regions in the NUTS hierarchy, following NUTS1 regions and preceding NUTS3 regions. They are usually made up of groups of administrative regions or local authorities with similar socio-economic characteristics, such as economic activity, population density, or geographic features. For more information, please consider the definition of NUTS provided here: [Background - NUTS - Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

12. **Please name the areas in your country which suffer from low internet penetration compared to the national average and broadly describe where they are located. Additionally, please indicate whether these areas overlap with those identified as 'news deserts' in the previous questions.**

*Possible sources: The World Bank provides data on internet penetration rates for countries around the world. (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=IT>) Please revert to national statistical databases for internet usage by region. For example, in Italy, The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) provides data on internet usage and penetration rates by region.*

## 1. Granularity of the infrastructure of local media

### 13. Are communities in rural areas in your country well served by local media outlets? Please describe in the comment section what is the typical/most common media form for local media in rural areas: print and online, online only, radio or tv, and specify if they are local editions of national outlets or not.

*This question aims at assessing the actual presence and offer of local media for people and communities living in rural areas. By “rural area” we mean a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas and areas with forestry are typically described as rural. If in your country an administrative definition of “rural area” is adopted, please describe it in the comment section and answer this question accordingly.*

*Suggested sources: media registries, civil society reports, academic reports; if nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** There are almost no local media outlets in rural areas in my country.
- **High risk:** There are some local media outlets in rural areas in my country, but they do not reach the population living in the most remote areas of the country.
- **Medium risk:** There are local media outlets in rural areas, but their distribution is problematic (e.g., decreasing number of selling points, low Internet penetration).
- **Low risk:** There are local outlets in rural areas, and they reach most of the population.
- **Very low risk:** There are many local outlets in rural areas, and they reach most of the population successfully.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

### 14. Are communities in suburban areas in your country well served by local media outlets? Please describe in the comment section what is the typical/most common media form for local media in suburban areas: print and online, online only, radio or tv, and specify if they are local editions of national outlets or not.

*This question aims to assess the actual presence and offer of local media for people and communities living in suburban areas. By “suburban area” it is meant the periphery of towns and cities, belonging to the same administrative jurisdiction. In some metropolitan areas, suburbs exist as separate residential communities within commuting distance of a city. If in your country an administrative definition of*

*“suburban area” is adopted, please describe it in the comment section and answer this question accordingly.*

*Suggested sources: media registries, civil society reports, academic reports; if nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** There are almost no local media outlets in suburban areas in my country.
- **High risk:** There are some local media outlets in suburban areas in my country, but their distribution is problematic (e.g., decreasing number of selling points, low Internet penetration)
- **Medium risk:** There are local outlets in suburban areas, but their diversity is limited.
- **Low risk:** There are local outlets in suburban areas, and they reach most of the population.
- **Very low risk:** There are many local outlets in suburban areas, and they reach most of the population successfully.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**15. Are communities in urban areas in your country well served by local media outlets? Please also describe in the comment section what is the typical/most common media form for local media in urban areas: print and online, online only, radio or tv, and specify if they are local editions of national outlets or not.**

*This question aims to assess the actual presence and offer of local media for people and communities living in urban areas. By “urban area” it is meant the area of medium-high density of population and infrastructure of built environment of towns and cities. If in your country an administrative definition of “urban area” is adopted, please describe it in the comment section and answer this question accordingly.*

*Suggested sources: media registries, civil society reports, academic reports; if nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** There are almost no local or community media outlets in urban areas in my country.
- **High risk:** There are some local media outlets in urban areas in my country, but their distribution is problematic (e.g., decreasing number of selling points, low Internet penetration)

- **Medium risk:** There are local outlets in urban areas, but their diversity is limited.
- **Low risk:** There are local or community media outlets in urban areas and they reach most of the population.
- **Very low risk:** There are many local or community media outlets in urban areas and they reach most of the population successfully.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**16. Has the number of local journalists and the location of where they are typically based changed in the last five years? Please report some numbers and/or statistics if available.**

*This question aims to assess the geographical distribution of journalists and media workers, in order to understand if they are mainly based in urban, suburban or rural areas. Please refer to the terminology employed for answering the three previous questions.*

*Suggested resources: national media registries, civil society reports, academic reports; if nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** Most of the journalists are based in centralized offices, and report about the communities they serve only from distance (“desk journalism”).
- **High risk:** Most of the journalists are based in centralized offices and they are assigned by newsrooms to report from local areas only occasionally, or some journalists are based in rural or small urban areas, but work for national news outlets (e.g., because living costs are lower outside the main cities), and report about local communities and events only occasionally.
- **Medium risk:** Some journalists are based in rural or small urban areas and report about communities and events happening there, but they are decreasing.
- **Low risk:** Many journalists are based in rural or small urban areas and report about communities there, and their number is stable.
- **Very low risk:** Many journalists are based in rural or small urban areas and report about communities there, engaging with communities in an effective and satisfactory manner.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

### 17. Is the PSM keeping local/regional correspondents or branches and is their geographical distribution adequate in practice?

*This question assesses whether the PSM keeps its own local/regional correspondents or branches. In the opposite case, the PSM can rely on material acquired from news agencies. We consider both if this is required by your country's legal framework and if it takes place in practice.*

*Suggested sources: National laws and regulations (e.g. acts, decrees, branch agreements), case law and regulatory decisions. EPRA's list of Media Legislation in Europe: [http://www.epra.org/news\\_items/updated-epra-list-on-media-legislation-in-europe](http://www.epra.org/news_items/updated-epra-list-on-media-legislation-in-europe); official documents, press releases, civil society reports, academic reports.*

- **Very high risk:** the PSM is not required by the legal framework to keep local correspondents, and it does not do so in practice neither
- **High risk:** The PSM maintains a small network of local correspondents or branches in practice. However, the size network has been shrinking over time and is insufficient to cover the whole country.
- **Medium risk:** the PSM maintains a stable network of local correspondents or branches. However, this network is not adapted to the size of the country
- **Low risk:** the PSM maintains a dense network of local correspondents or branches, which has remained stable over time.
- **Very low risk:** the PSM is required by the legal framework to keep local correspondents or branches, and the provision is implemented in practice, in all the country's provinces and on a consistent level of geographical granularity
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

### 18. Is the main news agency keeping local/regional correspondents or branches on the ground?

*This question assesses whether the main news agency in your country keeps its own local/regional correspondents or branches.*

*Suggested sources: Public documents, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs.*

- **Very high risk:** the main news agency has its only venue and all the workers based in the capital city, and local areas are covered mainly doing "desk journalism"

- **High risk:** the main news agency has its only venue and all the workers based in the capital city, and local areas are covered sending correspondents on the ground only in case of exceptional events taking place
- **Medium risk:** the main news agency keeps local/regional branches and correspondents, but the number of journalists in local areas is diminishing
- **Low risk:** the main news agency keeps local/regional correspondents or branches in smaller cities of the country, and the number of journalists in local areas is stable
- **Very low risk:** the main news agency keeps local correspondents or branches in all the country's provinces with a consistent level of geographical granularity, and the number of journalists in local areas is stable or increasing
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

## 2. Market and reach

### 19. Please indicate whether there has been an increase or decrease in local media revenue in recent years. If data is available, please provide it in the comments section.

*This variable assesses trends in local media revenue. Regarding the latter, "recent years" should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. Please note that media revenue includes advertising, sales, licensing fees, circulation, subscriptions, affiliate marketing, hosting events, e-commerce, donations, sponsorships, in print as well as in the digital outlets of legacy press - electronic versions of printed newspapers and websites. Note public funding is NOT included (specific question on this later). Regarding "trends of the overall economy", we refer to trends of GDP and inflation. If there are no aggregate statistics available in your country, please refer to financial reports of media outlets in your country for an indication of trends. If nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** Local media revenue has decreased significantly in recent years, and this decline is even more pronounced when compared to the overall media economy.
- **High risk:** Local media revenue has decreased in recent years, contrary to trends of the overall economy.
- **Medium risk:** In recent years, local media revenue has remained stable, or decreased, but remained relatively consistent with the trends of the overall economy.

- **Low risk:** Local media revenue has increased in recent years, contrary to trends of the overall economy.
- **Very low risk:** Local media revenue has increased significantly in recent years, and this increase is even more pronounced when compared to the overall media economy.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**20. Please indicate whether there has been an increase or decrease in the number of closures of local media outlets over the past five years. Additionally, please specify if different local media sectors (i.e., print, television, radio, and online-only outlets) have varied in this regard. If there are any specific media sectors that have been particularly affected, please specify which ones. Please comment on the most notable cases of closures in the comment section.**

*This variable assesses trends regarding closures of local media outlets. Please consult national databases for information. If there is no data accessible for your country, we recommend referring to data from other reputable international research institutions such as the Reuters Institute, to make an informed decision. Please note that “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. If data is unavailable, please refer to media registries, civil society reports, academic reports etc. If nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** There has been a significant increase in the number of closures of local media outlets across all media sectors.
- **High risk:** There has been a significant rise in the number of local media outlets closing across most media sectors. However, this trend has been partially offset by the growth of local media outlets in a few media sectors (e.g., online).
- **Medium risk:** Although there has been a slight increase in the number of closures of local media outlets in some media sectors, this has been sufficiently counterbalanced by an increase in local media outlets in other media sectors (e.g., online).
- **Low risk:** The number of local media outlets has remained stable.
- **Very low risk:** The number of local media outlets has increased across all local media sectors.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**



21. **Does the supply distribution chain (distribution companies and professional PoS) serve the local media market adequately? If data is available, please indicate if the number of press points of sales, press distribution companies and people working in the local press distribution sector have been decreasing in recent years.**

*This variable assesses the effectiveness of the supply distribution chain in the context of the local media market. The “supply distribution chain” refers to the process of distributing media products such as newspapers, television shows, and digital content. There are various intermediaries involved in the supply distribution chain of the media, such as publishers, distributors, and retailers which should be taken into account in the overall assessment. “Points of sale” (PoS) refers to a physical (e.g., kiosk) or virtual location (e.g., app/website/online marketplace) where prospective consumers can purchase a media product. Please note that “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. If data is unavailable, please refer to media registries, civil society reports, academic reports etc. If nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** The supply distribution chain serves the local media market inadequately across the whole media sector and the number of PoS, distribution companies and workers has decreased dramatically.
- **High risk:** On balance, the supply distribution chain serves the local media market inadequately in most sectors and the number of PoS, distribution companies and workers has decreased.
- **Medium risk:** The supply distribution chain adequately meets the needs of the local media market in certain media sectors, while falling short in others. The number of PoS, distribution companies and workers have decreased.
- **Low risk:** On balance, the supply distribution chain serves the local media market adequately in most media sectors. The number of PoS, distribution companies and workers are stable.
- 
- **Very low risk:** The supply distribution chain serves the local media market adequately across the whole media sector. The number of PoS, distribution companies and workers are stable or increasing.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**22. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Financial support provided by the government (whether it be at the national, regional, local, or municipal level) to local media outlets is sufficient?**

**In the comments section, please indicate the amount of support, and state whether it is a direct and/or indirect subsidy (e.g., tax exemptions, tax cuts, or discounted distribution rates) and/or state advertising. Additionally, please specify the legal basis for its allocation, and, if applicable, indicate which local media sectors receive the most support.**

*This variable assesses whether the allocation of financial support (subsidies and state advertising) sufficiently serves the needs of local media outlets. Direct subsidies are, inter alia, cash grants and interest-free loans. Indirect subsidies are, inter alia, tax exemptions, and reduced postal service or telephone rates. State advertising should be understood as any advertising paid for by governments (national, regional, local) and state-owned or controlled companies. Please note that the content of state advertising is not political advertising. Please consider subsidies and state advertising granted by all levels of government from the smallest administrative unit (i.e., municipality/commune) to the largest one (i.e., state). By “legal basis”, we request that you identify and provide the specific law, regulation, or legal principle that serves the basis for the subsidy, whether direct or indirect. For the purpose of clarity, an “unfavorable business environment”- mentioned in the answers- refers to, inter alia, high taxation rates for the media companies, stringent regulations, political instability, corruption, and a lack of infrastructure. Conversely, a “favorable business environment” refers to the opposite conditions.*

*Possible sources: Official documents, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs. When assessing the level of agreement with a statement, respondents are permitted to provide their own explanations (which should be added in the comment section), particularly if the circumstances of a specific country are unique and do not align with the descriptions provided on the Likert scale below. These descriptions are intended only as general guidelines to assist with decision-making.*

- **Strongly disagree:** The government does not provide any or an insufficient amount of financial support, and local media outlets operate within an unfavorable business environment, such as a high tax burden for the media sector.
- **Disagree:** The government does not provide enough financial support.
- **Partially agree:** While financial support from the government is offered, its sufficiency remains unclear due to the irregular and inconsistent nature of their provision.
- **Agree:** The government provides enough financial support, and the business environment for local media outlets is neither favorable nor unfavorable towards their operations.
- **Strongly agree:** The government provides enough financial support to local media outlets, and the business environment for local media outlets is advantageous.
- **No data**

- **Not applicable**

**23. Please indicate whether there has been an increase or decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to local media outlets in recent years. Additionally, if applicable, please specify, in the comments section, which local media sectors (i.e., print, television, radio, and online-only outlets) have particularly benefited or suffered in this regard.**

*This variable assesses trends in the allocation of financial support (subsidies and state advertising) for local media outlets. Please note that “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. Please consider subsidies and state advertising granted by all levels of government from the smallest administrative unit (i.e., municipality/commune) to the largest one (i.e., state). Please refer to the previous question for a comprehensive list of the different sources of state financial support which should be considered when evaluating this question.*

*Possible sources: Official documents, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs.*

- **Very high risk:** In recent years, there has been a significant decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to local media outlets across all local media sectors.
- **High risk:** In recent years, there has been a decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to local media outlets in most local media sectors.
- **Medium risk:** In recent years, there has been a decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to local media outlets in some local media sectors and increases in other sectors have not been sufficient to offset this reduction.
- **Low risk:** In recent years, the amount of financial support provided by the state to local media outlets has increased, or, at the very least, remained stable, across most sectors of the local media.
- **Very low risk:** In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the amount of financial support provided by the state to local media outlets across all sectors of the local media.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**24. Has there been an increase or decrease in commercial advertisement revenue for local media outlets in recent years? If data is available, please provide this information in the comments section. Additionally, please describe trends**

**according to the media sector (e.g., TV, radio, press, encompassing both their online versions and online-only outlets).**

*This variable assesses trends in commercial (private) advertising revenue. Commercial advertising can take many forms including direct ad sales, sponsored content, and branded content. Direct ad sales involve selling ad space to advertisers directly, sponsored content involves a media outlet creating content that is sponsored by an advertiser, and branded content involves creating content that is designed to promote a specific brand. Please note that “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022).*

*If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. If data is unavailable, please refer to media registries, civil society reports, academic reports etc. If nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts). If data is available, please describe trends in different media sectors as well.*

- **Very high risk:** Commercial advertising revenue for local media outlets has decreased in all local media sectors in recent years.
- **High risk:** Commercial advertising revenue for local media outlets has decreased in some local media sectors in recent years.
- **Medium risk:** Although there has been a decline in commercial advertising revenue for certain local media sectors, this is consistent with the broader economic trends affecting multiple industries.
- **Low risk:** Commercial advertising revenue for local media outlets has increased in some local media sectors in recent years.
- **Very low risk:** Commercial advertising revenue for local media outlets has increased in all local media sectors in recent years.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**25. Please indicate whether there has been an increase or decrease in revenue for community media outlets in recent years, and, if applicable, highlight variations in trends across different media sectors. If data is available, please disclose it in the comments section.**

*This variable assesses trends in community media revenue. Regarding the latter, “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. Please note that media revenue includes advertising, sales, licensing fees, circulation, subscriptions, affiliate marketing, hosting events, e-commerce, donations, sponsorships, in print as well as in the digital outlets of legacy press - electronic versions of printed newspapers and websites. Note*

*public funding is NOT included (specific question on this later). Regarding “trends of the overall economy”, we refer to trends of GDP and inflation.*

*If there are no aggregate statistics available in your country, please refer to financial reports of media outlets in your country for an indication of trends. If nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts).*

- **Very high risk:** Community media revenue has decreased significantly in recent years, and this decline is even more pronounced when compared to the overall media economy.
- **High risk:** Community media revenue has decreased in recent years, contrary to trends of the overall economy.
- **Medium risk:** In recent years, community media revenue has remained stable, or decreased, but remained relatively consistent with the trends of the overall economy.
- **Low risk:** Community media revenue has increased in recent years, contrary to trends of the overall economy.
- **Very low risk:** Community media revenue has increased significantly in recent years, and this increase is even more pronounced when compared to the overall media economy.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**26. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Financial support provided by the government (whether it be at the national, regional, local, or municipal level) to community media outlets is sufficient?**

**In the comments section, please indicate the amount of support, and state whether it is a direct and/or indirect subsidy (e.g., tax exemptions, tax cuts, or discounted distribution rates) and/or state advertising. Additionally, please specify the legal basis for its allocation, and, if applicable, indicate which community media sectors receive the most support.**

*This variable assesses whether the allocation of financial support (subsidies and state advertising) sufficiently serves the needs of local media outlets. Direct subsidies are, inter alia, cash grants and interest-free loans. Indirect subsidies are, inter alia, tax exemptions, and reduced postal service or telephone rates. State advertising should be understood as any advertising paid for by governments (national, regional, local) and state-owned or controlled companies. Please note that the content of state advertising is not political advertising. Please consider subsidies and state advertising granted by all levels of government from the smallest administrative unit (i.e., municipality/commune) to the largest one (i.e., state). By “legal basis”, we request that you identify and provide the specific law, regulation, or legal principle that*

*serves the basis for the subsidy, whether direct or indirect. For the purpose of clarity, an “unfavorable business environment”- mentioned in the answers- refers to, inter alia, high taxation rates for the media companies, stringent regulations, political instability, corruption, and a lack of infrastructure. Conversely, a “favorable business environment” refers to the opposite conditions.*

*Possible sources: Official documents, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs. When assessing the level of agreement with a statement, respondents are permitted to provide their own explanations (which should be added in the comment section), particularly if the circumstances of a specific country are unique and do not align with the descriptions provided on the Likert scale below. These descriptions are intended only as general guidelines to assist with decision-making.*

- **Strongly disagree:** The government does not provide any or an insufficient amount of financial support, and community media outlets operate within an unfavorable business environment, such as a high tax burden for the media sector.
- **Disagree:** The government does not provide enough financial support.
- **Partially agree:** While financial support from the government is offered, its sufficiency remains unclear due to the irregular and inconsistent nature of their provision.
- **Agree:** The government provides enough financial support, and the business environment for community media outlets is neither favorable nor unfavorable towards their operations.
- **Strongly agree:** The government provides enough financial support to community media outlets, and the business environment for community media outlets is advantageous.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**27. Please indicate whether there has been an increase or decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to community media outlets in recent years. Additionally, if applicable, please specify, in the comments section, which community media sectors (i.e., print, television, radio, and online-only outlets) have particularly benefited or suffered in this regard.**

*This variable assesses trends in the allocation of financial support (subsidies and state advertising) for community media outlets. Please note that “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. Please consider subsidies and state advertising granted by all levels of government from the smallest administrative unit (i.e., municipality/commune) to the largest one (i.e., state). Please refer to the previous question for a comprehensive list of the different sources of state financial support which should be considered when evaluating this question.*

*Possible sources: Official documents, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs.*

- **Very high risk:** In recent years, there has been a significant decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to community media outlets across all community media sectors.
- **High risk:** In recent years, there has been a decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to community media outlets in most community media sectors.
- **Medium risk:** In recent years, there has been a decrease in the amount of financial support provided by the state to community media outlets in some community media sectors and increases in other sectors have not been sufficient to offset this reduction.
- **Low risk:** In recent years, the amount of financial support provided by the state to community media outlets has increased, or, at the very least, remained stable, across most sectors of the community media.
- **Very low risk:** In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the amount of financial support provided by the state to community media outlets across all sectors of the community media.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**28. Is the situation of media serving local communities characterised by a high ownership concentration? Please specify in the comment section the geographical areas where concentration of ownership at a local level is most prevalent, as well as the media sectors that are particularly impacted by this.**

*This variable assesses the degree of local media ownership concentration. By high concentration we mean one or two media outlets controlling more than half of the audience in their sector or cross-sector (audiovisual, radio, newspapers, digital). If data are available, please provide them in the comment section as well. By “media serving local communities” we also refer to local editions of national media outlets.*

*If possible, report data broken down by media sector. In case of lack of data and given your description of the local media sphere in your country (questions 7, 8 and 9) consider particular cases of high local media ownership concentration in certain areas of your country, and estimate the risk level according to this.*

*Possible sources: Please rely on media registries, literature, reports, and case studies to form your assessment. If you don't have audience/circulation shares, you can refer to the market shares.*

- **Very high risk:** Local media ownership is highly concentrated throughout most areas of the country, and across more than one media sector. Local media owners are mainly tied to non-media related businesses.
- **High risk:** Local media ownership is highly concentrated throughout most areas of the country and in more than one media sector.
- **Medium risk:** Local media ownership is concentrated across roughly half of the country and/or in one or more media sectors.
- **Low risk:** The concentration of local media ownership is not significant, except for a few isolated/marginal cases that can be detected.
- **Very low risk:** Local media ownership is not concentrated, and local media owners are not tied to non-media related businesses.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**29. To what extent are people willing to pay for local news? If possible, please specify in the comments section for which media market sector (e.g., TV, radio, press including both online versions and online-only outlets) people are most willing to pay for news. Additionally, if applicable, please specify the ways people typically pay for local news (i.e., via subscription-based models, advertising-supported models, pay-per-article models, newsstand sales, voluntary donations, crowdfunding, or others).**

*This variable assesses the willingness of people to pay for local news. This variable elaborates on that provided by the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2021>) which provides data on the proportion of ongoing subscribers that pay for local media vis-à-vis national media outlets. This could be a subscription (including both newspaper delivery subscriptions and digital versions), combined digital/print subscriptions, a one-off payment for an app, article or e/edition or a donation.*

*If data is unavailable, please refer to media registries, civil society reports, academic reports etc. If nothing emerges from these sources, consider conducting interviews with experts (journalists, editors, public officials, media experts). If data is available, describe the situation in different media sectors as well.*

- **Very high risk:** Across the whole media sector, there is a very low percentage of people who are willing to pay for local news and this percentage has been decreasing in recent years.



- **High risk:** In some media sectors, there is a very low percentage of people who are willing to pay for local news.
- **Medium risk:** In some media sectors, there is a low percentage of people who are willing to pay for local news. However, there are signs of an increase in recent years.
- **Low risk:** In some media sectors, there is a high percentage of people who are willing to pay for local news.
- **Very low risk:** Across the whole media sector, there is a very high percentage of people who are willing to pay for local news and this percentage has been increasing in recent years.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**30. Are there sources of funding available (from either public or private sources) for local media outlets that aim to promote innovation (e.g., grants, venture capital, crowdfunding, corporate sponsorships, accelerator programs, and partnerships)? Additionally, please indicate which media sectors have received the highest and lowest levels of benefit from innovation funding, if applicable. If data is available, please disclose it in the comments section.**

*This variable aims to assess the extent of commercial and/or public sources of funding garnered to promoting innovation in the local media market. Innovation funding can include grants, venture capital, crowdfunding, corporate sponsorships, accelerator programs, and partnerships, among others. In the context of local media and innovation, an innovation grant is a fund typically provided by a government or grant funding institution to a business with the aim of promoting innovation. Venture capital is a specialized form of financial intermediation usually targeted at potentially high-growth and innovative start-ups. Corporate sponsorship in the context of innovation refers to the conditional allocation of company funds to a media organization committed to innovation, in exchange for advertising space. Partnerships may refer to funded projects that bring together local media organizations to promote best practices, innovation and knowledge-sharing. Crowdfunding is a means of raising money to finance innovative businesses, enabling media organizations an opportunity to collect money from many people via online platforms (e.g., Kickstarter).*

*Possible sources: See the European Regional Development Fund, the New European Media Initiative, and national journalism grant organizations, if applicable. Please also refer to crowdfunding platforms or venture capital websites for data.*

- **Very high risk:** There are currently no available sources of funding.
- **High risk:** The available sources of funding for innovation are scarce and insufficient.

- **Medium risk:** Funding sources for innovation exist, but their provision is irregular and not all are specifically geared towards promoting innovation.
- **Low risk:** Sufficient funding sources are available that are specifically tailored to promoting innovation within the local media market.
- **Very low risk:** There is a plethora of funding sources available that are specifically tailored to promoting innovation in the local media market.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**31. Has the weekly audience reach for local media outlets increased in recent years? In the comments section, please provide data on the percentage of weekly reach for local news outlets, both online and offline, and indicate any variations in trends across different media sectors, providing specific data for each sector, if available. If precise data is not available, please explain the reasons for your decision in the comments section, supported by evidence.**

*This variable assesses trends in weekly audience reach in recent years. Regarding the latter, “recent years” should ideally refer to the last 5 years (2018-2022). If data is used for periods exceeding five years, please specify the timeframe used in the comments section. Weekly audience reach is a metric that measures the number of people who have been exposed to a particular piece of content, advertisement, or media channel at least once during a given week. In other words, it refers to the size of the audience that has been reached by a message or media outlet over a period of seven days. Please note that in case the data for 'weekly' audience reach is not accessible, you may provide data related to other time intervals and specify the specific period under consideration in the comments section, such as monthly, bi-weekly, and so on.*

*Suggested sources: Reuters Digital News Report and national sources where available. The Reuters Digital News Report measures the weekly reach as the percentage (%) of survey respondents who are exposed to a given media brand, both online and offline, including local media providers.*

- **Very high risk:** In recent years, there has been a significant decrease in the weekly audience reach for local media outlets, and this decline is even more pronounced when compared to national media outlets.
- **High risk:** In recent years, the weekly audience reach has decreased.
- **Medium risk:** The weekly audience reach for local media outlets has fluctuated between increasing and decreasing levels.

- **Low risk:** In recent years, the weekly audience reach has increased, or at the very least, remained stable.
- **Very low risk:** In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the weekly audience reach for local media outlets, and this increase is even more pronounced when compared to national media outlets.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

### 3. Safety of local journalists

#### 32. How do you evaluate the working conditions of journalists working for local media outlets in your country?

*This variable aims to assess the conditions of work of local journalists especially in terms of pay, employment protection and social security benefits, as the social conditions of work may impact the number of journalists exercising their profession at local level. By social conditions of work, we mean labour and/or social security legislation that guarantee minimum rates of pay, regulation of open-ended and temporary contracts, regulation on the termination of contractual relationship, including dismissal procedures, unemployment benefit systems and maternity or parental leave. Sources: Reports from NGOs or journalists' professional associations/unions; and interviews with journalists' professional associations/unions.*

- **Very high risk:** Poor working conditions with no labour and/or social security legislation applicable to local journalists and thus no social conditions of work guaranteed.
- **High risk:** Poor working conditions with labour and/or social security legislation that guarantee at least one social condition of work among: minimum rates of pay, regulation of open-ended and temporary contracts, regulation on the termination of contractual relationship, including dismissal procedures, unemployment benefit systems and maternity or parental leave.
- **Medium risk:** Acceptable working conditions with labour and/or social security legislation that guarantee at least two social conditions of work among: minimum rates of pay, regulation of open-ended and temporary contracts, regulation on the termination of contractual relationship, including dismissal procedures, unemployment benefit systems and maternity or parental leave.
- **Low risk:** Good working conditions with labour and/or social security legislation that guarantee at least three social conditions of work among: minimum rates of pay, regulation of open-ended and temporary contracts, regulation on the termination of contractual relationship, including dismissal procedures, unemployment benefit systems and maternity or parental leave.

- **Very low risk:** Very good working conditions with labour and/or social security legislation that guarantee minimum rates of pay, efficient representation through journalists' unions, regulation of open-ended and temporary contracts, regulation on the termination of contractual relationship, including dismissal procedures, unemployment benefit systems and maternity or parental leave.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

### 33. How do you evaluate the working conditions for freelancers or self-employed journalists working for local media outlets in your country?

*This variable aims to assess whether the remuneration of freelancers or self-employed journalists is in general consistent with the average salary in the country and whether labour and/or social security legislation apply to freelancers or self-employed journalists entitling them to social security protection, such as unemployment or pension schemes.*

*Sources: Reports from NGOs or journalists' organisations, and interviews with journalists' professional associations/unions.*

- **Very high risk:** The remuneration of freelancers or self-employed journalists is considerably below the average salary in the country, and they are not entitled to any sort of social security protection.
- **High risk:** The remuneration of freelancers or self-employed journalists is below the average salary in the country, and they are not entitled to any sort of social security protection.
- **Medium risk:** The remuneration of freelancers or self-employed journalists is consistent with the average salary in the country, but they are not entitled to labour and/or social security protection.
- **Low risk:** The remuneration of freelancers or self-employed journalists is consistent with the average salary in the country, and they are entitled to some labour and/or social security protection, such as unemployment or pension schemes.
- **Very low risk:** The remuneration of freelance journalists is higher than the average salary in the country, and they are entitled to labour and/or social security protection, such as unemployment or pension schemes.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**34. Were there attacks or threats to the physical safety of local journalists, including online ones, in your country during the last five years (2018-2022)? Is there an increasing trend of these attacks? Please report the related numbers and also, if any, the cases of murder.**

*This variable aims to assess the number of reported attacks or threats to the physical safety of journalists. The physical safety of journalists is essential to guarantee their freedom of expression and therefore the exercise of their profession. For trends in time, if possible, please consider data over the last five years (2018-2022).*

*Sources: National and international reports, such those from the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom <https://mappingmediafreedom.org/#/> and the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists <http://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/home>, to report the numbers.*

- **Very high risk:** Attacks and threats, including online ones, to the physical safety of local journalists are common, presenting an increasing trend over the last years. There is no legal framework in place to guarantee the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against journalists.
- **High risk:** Attacks and threats, including online ones, to the physical safety of local journalists are common, presenting an increasing trend over the last years. There is a legal framework in place to guarantee the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against journalists, but it is NOT effective.
- **Medium risk:** Attacks and threats, including online ones, to the physical safety of journalists occur occasionally but present an increasing trend over the last years. There is a legal framework in place to guarantee the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against journalists, but it is NOT effective.
- **Low risk:** Attacks and threats, including online ones, to the physical safety of journalists occur rarely and there has been NO increasing trend over the last years. There is a legal framework in place to guarantee the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against journalists, and it is generally effective.
- **Very low risk:** There have been no cases of attacks or threats, including online ones, to the physical safety of journalists in the last year and no increasing trend over the last years. There is a legal framework in place to guarantee the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against journalists, and it is effective.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**35. Are journalists' organisations present at the local level and are they effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and/or respect for professional standards for local journalists?**

*This variable assesses the power and effectiveness of the relevant associations and/or media councils in protecting journalistic standards at the local level.*

*Sources: Reports from NGOs or journalists' organisations, and interviews with journalists' organisations.*

- **Very high risk:** They are NOT present at local level and are NOT effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and/or respect for professional standards neither at national nor at local levels.
- **High risk:** They are present at local level but are NOT effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and/or respect for professional standards neither at national nor at local level.
- **Medium risk:** They are NOT present at local level and the ones at national level are only partially effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and/or respect for professional standards at national and local levels.
- **Low risk:** They are NOT present at local level, but the ones at national level are effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and/or respect for professional standards at local level.
- **Very low risk:** They are present at local level and are highly effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and/or respect for professional standards at national and local levels.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**36. How do you evaluate the professional standards of local journalists and newsrooms in your country?**

*This variable aims to assess whether local journalists and newsrooms are committed to ethical journalism principles and adhere to specific codes of ethics or conduct. For these principles we mean fact-based, accurate, independent, fair, impartial and accountable journalism.*

*Sources: Reports from NGOs or journalists' organisations, and interviews with journalists' organisations.*

- **Very high risk:** Local journalists and newsrooms are NOT attached to any ethical journalism principles NOR adhere to specific codes of ethics or conduct.

- **High risk:** Local journalists and newsrooms are usually NOT committed in practice to independent, fair, impartial and accountable journalism, though they adhere to codes of ethics or conduct.
- **Medium risk:** Local journalists and newsrooms are sometimes NOT committed to independent, fair, impartial and accountable journalism, and do NOT adhere to specific codes of ethics or conduct.
- **Low risk:** Local journalists and newsrooms are committed to independent, fair, impartial, accountable, fact-based and accurate journalism, though they do NOT adhere to specific codes of ethics or conduct.
- **Very low risk:** Local journalists and newsrooms are committed to ethical journalism principles and adhere to specific codes of ethics or conduct.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**37. Are local media or local media workers free from SLAPP cases or any other vexatious lawsuits that ask a disproportionate amount for damages and primarily aim to silence critics?**

*SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) are lawsuits filed to shut down acts of public participation, including public interest journalism. They are set out with little or no chance of success, ask a disproportionate amount for damages, target anyone who holds the powerful into account or engage in matters of public interest, and primarily aim to silence critics. This variable assesses if there are SLAPP cases in your country targeting local media and journalists. Please offer some examples of recent or relevant SLAPPs. If possible, please report in the comment if SLAPPs against local media workers are more common or dangerous than towards journalists working for national newsrooms (e.g., because they are less visible, or they live closer to the plaintiffs).*

*Sources: NGO reports; academic papers; interviews; case-law on SLAPPs.*

- **Very high risk:** SLAPP cases towards local journalists are common, and there is no anti-SLAPP legal framework in place.
- **High risk:** SLAPP cases are common, there is an anti-SLAPP legal framework in place, but it is NOT effective.
- **Medium risk:** SLAPP cases occur occasionally, but there is no anti-SLAPP legal framework in place.

- **Low risk:** SLAPP cases occur occasionally, there is an anti-SLAPP legal framework in place, and it is effective.
- **Very low risk:** SLAPP cases occur rarely, there is an anti-SLAPP legal framework in place, and it is effective.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

## 4. Editorial independence

### 38. Is the political control of local media by (local or national) ruling parties, partisan groups or politicians effectively regulated and prevented in practice?

*This variable investigates the risk of conflict of interests and political control in local media, starting from assessing the presence, implementation and effectiveness of available legislation. The final aim is to assess the extent of political control in local media, that has to be understood in this context as: politicians concurrently holding media ownership and governmental office (conflict of interest); politicians (not necessarily in governmental office) directly resulting in the ownership structure; family members or friendly business-people holding ownership control on behalf of politicians (indirect control). In the comment box, please describe the situation and indicate which media are most at risk and report relevant cases.*

*Also please note that:*

- *This variable does not aim to capture political control over PSM, nor the use of state advertising and state subsidies to the media as a means to exercise political control.*
- *A regulation is considered implemented when there is a designated body tasked with monitoring compliance with the law/ functional equivalent to the law and with imposing proportionate remedies (behavioral and/or structural) in case of non-respect of the law/functional equivalent to the law.*

*Suggested sources: Analysis of national and local laws and regulations. Overviews of national media legislation can be found on: EPRA website:<http://www.epra.org/articles/media-legislation> ; Websites of national regulatory and competition authorities; Merlin database European Audiovisual Observatory:<http://merlin.obs.coe.int/>; Case law, decision practice, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs; Company registers; Media registers; Existing media ownership studies and reports and databases*

- **Very high risk:** there is no regulation at all, and political control is very present across all local media sectors, with both active politicians in government being also media owners (conflict of interest) and indirect ownership control
- **High risk:** regulation presents huge shortcomings, which severely affect both its implementation and effectiveness. Most of the market's segments are under direct political control (exerted via ownership).



- **Medium risk:** Existing regulation is partially implemented and effective and there are some examples of direct or indirect political control in one or some media sectors.
- **Low risk:** Existing regulation is implemented and effective, with some rare cases of concern.
- **Very low risk:** Existing regulation is implemented and totally effective. No signs of either direct or indirect control.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

### 39. In case state subsidies (both direct and indirect) are distributed to private local media outlets, is it done in a fair and transparent manner?

*This variable assesses both the availability of criteria for distribution of state subsidies to media outlets (direct and indirect) and the actual practice. Please note that this variable focuses on subsidies to commercial media outlets that operate on a local level. The absence of a clear set of criteria may relate to but is not limited to vague legal regulations.*

*Direct state subsidies are to be understood as e.g., cash grants and interest-free loans to media outlets other than PSM. Indirect state subsidies are to be understood as e.g., tax exemptions, reduced postal service and telephone rates to media outlets other than PSM. Please note that this variable does not concern state advertising.*

*In the comment box, please:*

- *summarize or copy-paste the relevant legal provisions (mention the Law and the article(s) of the law that you refer to, and add it as a source)*
- *describe the actual practice of distribution, indicating which media is most affected by discriminatory and non-transparent practices*
- *provide some examples*

*Suggested sources: National laws and regulations; Official sources (e.g., Ministry of culture & media); Academic reports, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs.*

- **Very high risk:** There are no criteria at all and state subsidies to the local media are extremely skewed both in the amounts and beneficiaries. This issue is exacerbated by the challenging and unfriendly business conditions that local media outlets must navigate.
- **High risk:** The set of criteria is ineffective. There are systematic cases of unfair, and non-transparent distribution when it comes to both direct and indirect subsidies
- **Medium risk:** State subsidies are distributed to media outlets based on a set of criteria and it is unclear whether distribution is fair, or the distribution is not always fair and transparent, or distribution proves fair and transparent only in one typology (direct/indirect)

- **Low risk:** Criteria are clearly defined, and direct and indirect subsidies are generally distributed in a fair and transparent manner; there are only a few isolated cases that are unfair, or where the distribution is not transparent.
- **Very low risk:** Criteria are clearly defined, direct and indirect subsidies are distributed to local media both in a fair and transparent manner and the business environment for local media outlets is favorable or, at the very least, not antagonistic towards their operations.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**40. In case state advertising is distributed to private local media outlets, is this done in a fair and transparent manner?**

*This variable assesses both the availability of criteria for distribution of state advertising and the fairness and transparency of such distribution at the local level. State advertising should be understood broadly as covering promotional or self promotional activities undertaken by, for or on behalf of a wide range of public authorities or entities, including governments, as well as state-owned enterprises or other state-controlled entities in different sectors, at national, regional and local level. The content of this advertising does not need to be political. Please make sure to also consider the allocation that is conducted via intermediaries, such as the media buying agencies.*

*In the comment box, please:*

- *summarize or copy-paste the relevant legal provisions (mention the Law and the article(s) of the law that you refer to, and add it as a source)*
- *describe the actual practice of distribution, indicating which media is most affected by discriminatory and non-transparent practices*
- *provide examples*

Suggested sources: *National laws and regulations; Official sources; Academic reports, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs.*

- **Very high risk:** There are no criteria at all and there is no fairness and transparency at all in the distribution of state advertising to the local media
- **High risk:** State advertising is distributed to media outlets based on an ineffective set of criteria and there are systematic cases where state advertising is distributed in unfair and non-transparent manner
- **Medium risk:** State advertising is distributed to media outlets based on a set of criteria, but it is unclear whether they are fair, or the distribution is not always transparent (It is unclear whether distribution is fair, or the distribution is not always fair and transparent, or distribution proves fair and transparent only in one typology)

- **Low risk:** State advertising is distributed to media outlets based on a clear set of criteria and state advertising is generally distributed to local media outlets in a fair and transparent manner, and there are only a few isolated cases that they are unfair, or that the distribution is not transparent.
- **Very low risk:** State advertising is distributed to local media outlets in a fair and transparent manner.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

#### **41. Are local media and their editorial content independent from commercial influence in practice?**

*This variable assesses whether commercial entities and/or the owners of local media generally abstain from influencing editorial content, starting from the evaluation of the protection system in place. It is not concerned with influence by political parties/politicians. In the digital environment, you should also consider "commercial influence" a systematic and planned link between editorial decision making and reach of the content (clickbait). The term "commercial influence" includes situations where media groups promote their own products. Laws and self-regulatory mechanisms include:*

- *Protections to journalists in cases of changes in ownership / editorial line, for example social protection schemes, or other legal and economic guarantees also set by collective agreements and/or self-regulation. If journalists risk losing their salary in such events, there is a risk that commercial interests undermine journalistic independence*
- *Regulatory safeguards, including internal bodies or self-regulatory instruments, which seek to ensure that decisions regarding appointments and dismissals of editors-in-chief are not influenced by commercial interests and are they effectively implemented*
- *Laws and/or self-regulatory measures stipulating the obligation of journalists and/or media outlets not to be influenced by commercial interests (i.e. measures that prevent journalists from having the ability and/or incentive to base editorial decisions on commercial interests; measures that make sure that editorial and journalistic content is strictly separated from marketing, advertising and other commercial activities).*
- *Regulatory safeguards ensuring that decisions regarding appointments and dismissals of editors-in-chief are not dependent on the commercial interests of media organizations*

*In the comment box, please:*

- *report laws and self-regulatory mechanisms*
- *describe the actual practice, indicating which kind of media is most affected by commercial influence*
- *provide examples*

**Suggested sources:** *National laws and regulations; Contracts; Case law; Self-regulatory instruments; Decisions of self-regulatory bodies; Reports by NGOs or other relevant organizations; Interview with journalist, editor or representative of a journalistic association.*

- **Very high risk:** No laws or self-regulation available. Media owners and other commercial entities totally influence editorial content, which proves blatantly skewed

towards media proprietors' businesses or other commercial interests. Journalists are totally unprotected against changes in ownership.

- **High risk:** Laws and self-regulation are ineffective, and there is a high degree of editorial control through the means described in the methodology. Journalistic content is clearly blended with marketing, advertising and other commercial activities.
- **Medium risk:** There is partial regulation in place, or the available mechanisms do not effectively prevent media owners and other commercial entities from influencing editorial content. There is some evidence of biased appointments and dismissals and/or journalistic content is not clearly separated from marketing, advertising and other commercial activities.
- **Low risk:** Laws and self-regulatory instruments are in place and effective. Media owners and other commercial entities generally abstain from influencing editorial content, although some symptoms can be detected from time to time.
- **Very low risk:** Both laws and self-regulatory mechanisms are in place and effective. No signs of commercial influence at all. Journalistic content is clearly separated from marketing, advertising and other commercial activities.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

#### **42. Is editorial content in the local media independent from political influences?**

*This variable assesses whether regulatory and self-regulatory instruments that guarantee editorial independence are effectively implemented in practice, ultimately protecting from influence/pressures that local media can be subjected to. Please consider both traditional and online media. For the scope of this variable, regulatory measures are defined as e.g., safeguards (e.g., law, statute) that prevent political influence over the appointments and dismissals of editors-in-chief that could harm editorial autonomy; 'Self-regulatory measures' are defined as e.g., journalistic codes, codes of ethics.*

*For the scope of this variable, symptoms of political influence over editorial content might be understood as:*

- *The violation of ethical standards by journalists favoring politicians;*
- *The lack of sanctioning measures;*
- *The risks of dependency of editorial/decisional lines from the political activity of the owners and publishers, in some cases blatant;*
- *political interference concerning appointment and dismissals of editor-in-chief*
- *Other forms of influence may include and are not limited to: threats and intimidations, friendly warnings, smear campaigns against particular local media from public office representatives to ruin credibility, SLAPP lawsuits, long waiting for requested information, state representatives refusing to give interviews, refusing to answer FOI requests, cancellation of advertising contracts*

*In the comment box, please:*

- *report laws and self-regulatory mechanisms*
- *describe the actual practice, indicating which kind of media is most affected by political influence*
- *provide examples*

**Suggested sources:** *National laws and regulations; Contracts; Case law; Self-regulatory instruments; Decisions of self-regulatory bodies; Reports by NGOs or other relevant organizations; Interview with journalist, editor or representative of a journalistic association.*

- **Very high risk:** No regulatory and self-regulatory safeguards at all, with systematic and blatant cases of political influence and interference
- **High risk:** There are poor regulatory and self-regulatory safeguards, with systematic cases of influence
- **Medium risk:** There are some cases of interference on editorial content and/or regulation/self-regulation is only partially available or implemented
- **Low risk:** Regulation/self-regulation is in generally in place and effective
- **Very low risk:** Regulation/self-regulation is in place and totally effective in guaranteeing independence from party, partisan group or politicians over the editorial contents in the local media
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**43. Does the media authority have a remit over local media and/or hold local branches. If yes, is it / are local branches acting independently?**

*This variable assesses whether 1. the media authority has a remit over local media or holds local branches and 2. If the authority or its local branches act in an independent manner.*

*The analysis involves the assessment on the availability of the media authority's specific remit over local media and / or the presence of local branches of the authority, as well as an assessment on the activity of the media authority for guaranteeing a safe environment for local media. This might include - but it is not limited to - the issuing of licenses; the monitoring of local media programs to ensure protection of minors or protection from hate speech and how it is implemented in practice; decisions over concentration processes and conflict of interest.*

*In the comment box, please:*

- *report laws and evaluate their effectiveness*

- *assess the authority's activity, indicating cases (if any) where it/its local branches do not act independently.*

**Suggested sources:** National laws and regulations; Resolutions by the media authority; Academic reports, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs.

- **Very high risk:** There is no remit for the media authority to cover local media/ there are no local branches, and the national authority acts in a biased manner.
- **High risk:** The media authority has remit over local media/ local branches are in place but the authority/branches act in a biased manner.
- **Medium risk:** The media authority has remit over local media/ local branches are in place, but the actions of the media authority / branches cannot be considered totally independent from political and economic pressures.
- **Low risk:** The media authority has remit over local media/ local branches are in place and there are very few sporadic cases of biased actions.
- **Very low risk:** the media authority has a remit to cover local media/ there are local branches, and the authority/branches act in full independence
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

#### **44. Are PSM's local branches independent from the government or any other form of political influence in practice?**

*This variable assesses the effective editorial autonomy and independence in the local PSM sphere by examining whether: **appointment and dismissal procedures** for management and board functions in PSM, as well as for editors and editors-in-chief are based on professional and objective standards and if there are cases of political interference. The latter may be indicated when changes in the PSM management and/or the changes of government in the country also reflect on the changes in the PSM's editorial line. **This variable also assesses the existence of regulatory safeguards for fair and transparent procedures of funding, as well as their effective implementation against government's influence.***

*In the comment box, please:*

- *report laws and safeguards, and evaluate their design and effectiveness both when it comes to governance and funding*
- *assess the actual practice, indicating cases (if any) where local PSM are not independent*

**Suggested sources:** Analysis of national laws and regulations, including media law, administrative law, company law, labor law, conventions between PSM and the government; Academic reports, press reports, reports of independent bodies or NGOs; Case law, decision practice

- **Very high risk:** Regulatory safeguards do not exist, both when it comes to appointment and dismissals of relevant management positions and funding. PSM's local branches are totally captured by the political power.
- **High risk:** Weak regulation exists, both when it comes to appointment and dismissals of relevant management positions and funding. The government's political influence is widespread.
- **Medium risk:** There is partial regulation in place, both when it comes to appointment and dismissals of relevant management positions and funding. The absence of a comprehensive framework allows for political influence over local PSM.
- **Low risk:** Regulatory safeguards exist and are generally effective in preventing governmental or other forms of political influence, with sporadic examples in the opposite direction.
- **Very low risk:** Regulatory safeguards exist and PSM's local branches are completely independent from the government or other forms of political influence. No examples in the opposite direction.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

#### 45. To what extent do you agree that there is content diversity in local media?

*This variable assesses whether there is a diversity in the content of local media. The diversity relates to the kind of stories and events that get reported, the people (ordinary citizens, politicians, members of associations) whose voice is reported directly in the news, the points of view of reporting, the tone of the stories reported. When assessing the level of agreement with a statement, respondents are permitted to provide their own explanations (which should be added in the comment section), particularly if the circumstances of a specific country are unique and do not align with the descriptions provided on the Likert scale below. These descriptions are intended only as general guidelines to assist with decision-making.*

**Suggested sources:** *this element is usually assessed through the content analysis of news texts. For the sake of this research, please answer this question by reporting data and information from secondary sources (e.g., academic literature or civil society reports), if available. If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Strongly disagree:** local media are covering a very limited scope of stories. Reporting is completely lacking diversity in viewpoints and tone.

- **Disagree:** local media are covering few storylines and the viewpoints and tone are generally non-diverse.
- **Partially agree:** local media provide diverse scope of stories to an extent and viewpoints and tone are sometimes non-diverse.
- **Agree:** local media provide diverse scope of stories and viewpoints and tone are generally diverse
- **Strongly agree:** Local media provide very diverse scope of stories and the viewpoints and tone are highly diverse
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

## 5. Social inclusiveness

### 46. Is the PSM broadcasting in minority languages in your country?

*This question assesses the extent to which individuals belonging to "minority communities" are able to obtain news and information in their own language in the public service media (PSM). "Minority" is defined as a cultural or social group that is numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a country. In addition, minorities hold a non-dominant position in society, with their members possessing ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics that differ from those of the rest of the population. This variable has been elaborated on the basis of CoE and OSCE documents. In particular, the OSCE's Oslo Recommendations (p. 6) state that: "Persons belonging to national minorities should have access to broadcast time in their own language on publicly funded media. At national, regional, and local levels the amount and quality of time allocated to broadcasting in the language of a given minority should be commensurate with the numerical size and concentration of the national minority and appropriate to its situation and needs." Source: OSCE (1998). The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities & Explanatory Note. <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/67531?download=tru>*

*Suggested sources: Please check the programming schedule of all PSMs in your country. National Regulatory Authorities. National laws and regulations, civil society reports. If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Very high risk:** There is no regulation providing that the PSM must provide news in minority languages, and it is not done in practice either.
- **High risk:** The PSM provides news in minority languages, but this practice is limited to some languages only, and is not constant and regular.
- **Medium risk:** The PSM provides news in minority languages but only for some languages.
- **Low risk:** The PSM provides news in most minority languages.



- **Very low risk:** There is a regulation providing that the PSM must provide news in minority languages and most of minorities, legally and not legally recognized, have access to news in minority languages
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**47. Are minorities represented in the news reporting by the PSM in your country, and how?**

*This question assesses the representation of minorities (including migrants) in the news content broadcasted by the PSM (tv and radio). By “representation” we mean the narrative (in terms of events and people covered and given voice to, tone, eventual bias in reporting).*

*Please refer to the definition of “minority” outlined in the description of the previous question.*

*Suggested sources: secondary sources such as academic literature, civil society reports, reports by the authority supervising the respect of internal pluralism principles in your country (usually, the media authority). If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Very high risk:** Minorities are not represented in the PSM at all, or when they are represented in the news, the coverage is most of the time biased and misleading. There are no legal provisions to ensure the media representation of minorities on PSM.
- **High risk:** Only some minorities are represented in the PSM's news, but their coverage is sometimes biased and misleading
- **Medium risk:** Most minorities are represented in the PSM's news, yet their coverage can sometimes be biased and misleading
- **Low risk:** Most minorities are represented in PSM's news, and their coverage is mainly factual-based and fair.
- **Very low risk:** all minorities, including migrants, are represented in the PSM's news, their coverage is mainly factual-based and fair, and direct voice is given to representatives of the community. The PSM ToS or other regulatory documents guarantees a balanced representation of minorities
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**48. Are private media outlets and services (tv, radio, press, online) offering news services in minority languages?**

*This question assesses the extent to which individuals belonging to "minority communities" are able to obtain news and information in their own language in private media outlets and services.*

*Suggested sources: Secondary sources such as academic literature, civil society reports, reports by the authority supervising the respect of internal pluralism principles in your country (usually, the national media regulatory authority). If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Very high risk:** private media outlets don't offer any news services in minority languages
- **High risk:** private media outlets very rarely offer news services in minority languages
- **Medium risk:** private media outlets offer news services in some minority languages but in a limited and not regular way
- **Low risk:** private media outlets frequently offer certain news services in minority languages
- **Very low risk:** private media outlets offer news services in most minority languages (both of legally and not legally recognised minorities) on a regular basis
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

#### **49. Are minorities represented in the news reporting by private media outlets and services in your country, and how?**

*This question assesses the representation of "minority communities" (including migrants) in the news content offered by private media outlets (tv, radio, press, their online version and online only outlets). By "representation" we mean the narrative (in terms of events and people covered and given voice to, tone, eventual bias in reporting).*

*Suggested sources: secondary sources such as academic literature, civil society reports, reports by the authority supervising the respect of internal pluralism principles in your country (usually, the media authority). If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Very high risk:** Minorities are not represented in the coverage of private media outlets at all, or when they are represented in the news, the coverage is most of the time biased and misleading.
- **High risk:** Only some minorities are represented in the coverage of private media outlets, but their coverage is sometimes biased and misleading
- **Medium risk:** Most minorities are represented in the coverage of private media outlets, yet their coverage can sometimes appear biased and misleading

- **Low risk:** Most minorities are represented in the coverage of private media outlets, and their coverage is mainly factual-based and fair
- **Very low risk:** all minorities, including migrants, are represented in the coverage of private media outlets, their coverage is mainly factual-based and fair, and direct voice is given to representatives of the community
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**50. Are there prominent outlets or channels addressing marginalized groups in your country? If yes, please name and describe them (what is their audience, their usual content, how long they have been in place...)**

*This question aims to understand if some outlets or channels address specific marginalized group such as women, persons with disability, youth or similar. By prominent we mean publications/broadcasters that have a wider reach and solid reputation.*

**Suggested sources:** Answer this question by either looking at programme description of specific media at national license allocation authority or reporting data and information from secondary sources (e.g., academic literature or civil society /relevant organization reports), if available. If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.

- **Very high risk:** There are no specific outlets or channels addressing marginalized groups in the country.
- **High risk:** There are very few specific outlets or channels addressing marginalized groups in the country, and their quality and reach is very low.
- **Medium risk:** A certain number of outlets of this kind exist but they have limited reach and quality.
- **Low risk:** Outlets of this kind exist, and they are in most cases reaching their target audience, offering on average good quality information.
- **Very low risk:** Outlets of this kind exist and are successfully reaching their target audience with good quality
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**51. Do local media provide sufficient public interest news to meet the critical information needs of the communities they serve? Please report in the comment**

**section if there are variations between different local media sectors in this regard.**

*This question aims at assessing if the so-called “critical information needs” (CINs) of local communities are met. By CINs we mean information that is useful to citizens in order to make informed decisions, on topics that affect the quality of their lives, such as education, health, public transport, voting procedures, budget issues, infrastructure etc. By soft news we mean covering stories that are related to entertainment and/or lifestyle. By sensationalistic reporting we mean tabloid stories, unverified information, gossip, clickbait etc.*

*Suggested sources: this element is usually assessed through the content analysis of news texts. For the sake of this research, please answer this question by reporting data and information from secondary sources (e.g., academic literature or civil society reports), if available. If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Very high risk:** Local media do not meet critical information needs of the communities they serve and focus only on sensationalistic or soft news reporting with no public interest focus.
- **High risk:** Local media rarely meet critical information needs insufficiently and the framing of news is highly disputable (e.g. used for promotion of local authorities, reducing the severity of the issues covered...).
- **Medium risk:** Local media meet some community’s CINs, but they sometimes focus on other topics because of business-related issues (external pressures, click-baiting...)
- **Low risk:** Local media meet community’s CINs most of the time and there are very few sporadic cases when they lack to report on this type of public interest news.
- **Very low risk:** Local media provide public interest news that meet the CINs needs of the community they serve, in a satisfying manner.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**52. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Local media outlets engage with their audience and with local communities?**

*This question aims to assess the level of engagement with the audience local and/or community media outlets develop with their audience. By engagement, we do not only refer to the level of “trust” towards these outlets (if existing, please report data on this point), but also to the fact that research shows that local and community media enhance the levels of cohesion within a community, contributing to creating a narrative about it. Sometimes, also contributing to increasing the level of solidarity within the community itself (one example comes from the role of local media during the Covid-19 pandemic, reporting and promoting solidarity initiatives or the needs of some members of the community). When*

*assessing the level of agreement with a statement, respondents are permitted to provide their own explanations (which should be added in the comment section), particularly if the circumstances of a specific country are unique and do not align with the descriptions provided on the Likert scale below. These descriptions are intended only as general guidelines to assist with decision-making.*

*Suggested sources: this element is usually assessed through qualitative audience studies, e.g., through focus groups; also, there might be research on local journalistic practices, i.e., how journalists engage with local communities, whether offline or online, for example on social media. For the sake of this research, please answer this question by reporting data and information from secondary sources (e.g., academic literature or civil society reports), if available. If deemed necessary, please consider conducting interviews with experts.*

- **Strongly disagree:** Local media are very detached from the local community, and local journalists do not interact with their audience.
- **Don't agree:** Local media don't engage so much with local communities since they are not able to conduct meaningful audience studies.
- **Partially agree:** Local media are connected to their local community however interaction tends to fluctuate
- **Agree:** Local media are connected to their community and in most cases, they interact with their audience
- **Strongly agree:** Local and community media are connected to their community and successfully interact with their audience, conducting meaningful audience studies.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

## 6. Best practices and open public sphere

**53. Are news media organisations in your country experimenting with innovative responses to improve reach and audience, proposing new forms of work, journalistic products or services? Please report some examples in the comment section.**

*This variable assesses whether news media organisations in your country are addressing the challenges posed by the decline of local or community news provision. For innovation responses we mean new products or services that positively impact reach and audience. Please note that you should consider legacy and digital native media, as well as for-profit and non-profit organisations. Please, describe briefly and provide, if possible, links to the initiatives. Insert data in the comment area, if available.*

*Initiatives considered in this variable should not include those related to business models. Instead, we are looking for initiatives concerning content production, content delivery and audience engagement.*

*Innovations could consider, among others, the following areas (based on the categories identified by Posetti, 2018 for the Oxford Reuters Journalism Innovation Project):*

- *storytelling, reporting*
- *audience engagement*
- *distribution*
- *technology and products*
- *people and culture (e.g. skills development and training)*
- *organisation and structure*
- *leadership and management*
- *structural innovations (e.g. workflows, reporting lines, and interdepartmental collaboration)*
- *other forms of non-business related innovations.*

*Suggested sources: Non-profit media industry publications, research reports from institutions and public bodies, academic research, reports from NGOs, news organizations' websites and social media news feeds.*

- **Very high risk:** There are NO initiatives of this kind.
- **High risk:** There are very few media organisations experimenting with new forms of work, journalistic products or services.
- **Medium risk:** There are a few media organisations experimenting with new forms of work, journalistic products or services.
- **Low risk:** There are some media organisations experimenting with new forms of work, journalistic products or services.
- **Very low risk:** There are many media organisations experimenting with new forms of work, journalistic products or services.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

**54. Are there any citizen or civil society initiatives in your country providing innovative responses to tackle the problem posed by the decline of local and community news provision?**

*This variable assesses whether citizen initiatives or civil society organisations in your country are addressing the challenges posed by the retreat or withdrawal of traditional media at local level (e.g. local radios, podcasts, curated pages in social media channels). By innovative responses we mean new products or services that positively impact reach and audience, by covering local communities, under-served audiences or marginalised groups. Please note that you should consider digital and non-digital non-profit initiatives organised by citizens, civil society organisations as well as for-profit organisations.*

*Please, describe briefly and provide, if possible, links to the initiatives. Insert data in the comment area, if available.*

*Suggested sources: Reports from non-profit news organizations, reports, web pages and social media accounts of media industry associations/media foundations, reports by academic and non-profit institutions, social media feeds, blogs and forums.*

- **Very high risk:** There are NO initiatives of this kind.
- **High risk:** There are very few citizen and/or civil society initiatives at local level and they are NOT well-known and followed by audiences.
- **Medium risk:** There are a few citizen and/or civil society initiatives and, though they are well-known, they are NOT followed by significant audiences at local level.
- **Low risk:** There are some citizen and/or civil society initiatives at local or community levels and they are well-known and followed by audiences at local level.
- **Very low risk:** There are many citizen and/or civil society initiatives at local or community and they are well-known and followed by audiences at local level.
- **No data**
- **Not applicable**

## Preliminary map

**55. Please draw on the map the areas that can be considered a "news deserts" according to the definition provided in the attached methodology, or any definition that you believe better suits the context of your country. If a different definition is provided, please disclose it in the comment section.**

*For drawing the relevant news desert areas, please use the colors corresponding to each of the 6 indicators under study (Granularity of the infrastructure, Market and reach, Safety of local journalists, Editorial independence, Social inclusiveness, Best practices and open public sphere).*