



# ZIMBABWE MEDIA COMMISSION

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### ZIMBABWE MEDIA INDUSTRY STATUS REPORT PROJECT PROPOSAL

#### BACKGROUND

The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) is established by section 248 of the Constitution. Section 249 of the same Constitution provides for the functions of the Commission. The ZMC's mandate is guided by its two enabling legal instruments. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) [Chapter 20:33] provides a framework for the realisation of the provisions of Section 61 of the Constitution which gives citizens the right to access information held by public entities for the purposes of promoting transparency and accountability and at the same time, for the protection of a right. The Zimbabwe Media Commission Act [Chapter 10:35] reiterates the functions of the Commission as given by section 249 of the Constitution as well as provide for the promotion and protection of those freedoms as provided for by section 61 of the Constitution that guarantees freedom of expression and the media. The Act empowers the Commission to institute investigations and enquiries into any conduct likely to threaten freedom of expression and of the media.

While section 61 of the Constitution provides for the freedom of expression and that of the media, the same Constitution does not define what media is. At the same time, the functions of the ZMC is given by section 249 of the Constitution seem more inclined to the traditional media platforms. The term media, from universal application is so broad to include broadcasting, print media, internet-based platforms, film, videography, productions and all the units that comprise this value chain.

#### Project Scope

The essence of this project is to determine what really constitutes the media industry in Zimbabwe, its value chain, challenges and opportunities and the attendant regulatory frameworks. The research should proffer solutions and policy issues that should be attendant.

The project is expected to inform the Commission on the current media terrain in Zimbabwe and how it relates to other jurisdictions.

Understanding the current dynamics shaping the media sector will assist the Commission with having the necessary knowledge and understanding to inform policy direction and any interventions needed to be taken to promote the growth of the sector.

The media sector, unlike other economic or social sectors is not clearly defined and it becomes necessary to undertake a research that provides more insights and components that comprise of this sector. Currently, when looked from an economic perspective, it is difficult to quantify the economic value of the sector to the economy, let alone to state with certainty the contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Even the national economic statistics do not state the value in contribution of the media sector to the national economy.

While the Constitution gives the Commission power and mandate over all media in the country, the situation on the ground points to fragmented regulatory frameworks. At the global scene, traditional media regulatory frameworks are coalescing or emerging as a result of the the rapid developments in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector which brings with it the phenomenon of Convergence.

The dominant mainstream media in the country seems to be urban centric both in terms of content and reach. This scenario gives rise to unbalanced development as the marginalised areas are left us of the mainstream development debate. It is in this scope that the project should critically analyse the current media landscape in the context of devolution. There is need to research to look into issues of the role of community media and its sustainability.

Much concerns have been raised on the decrease of professional standards in the media. The research should give an analysis of the professional conduct of the media and how breaches on freedom of expression and of the press can be addressed.

At the end, the research should provide a clear proposal on what needs to be done in the Commission's desire to build a media that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the generality of Zimbabweans as provided for by the Constitution.

**The Consultant** shall be responsible for compiling a comprehensive National Media Industry Status Report covering all sectors of the media. The report should cover the print, electronic, online and film media industry. The report should include the following;

- Structure of the media industry, skills available or desired;

- Challenges being faced by the media industry;
- Opportunities available;
- Trends in the usage and promotion of indigenous languages through the media;
- The current economic situation and its impact on the industry;
- Challenges facing community newspapers;
- The cost of printing and raw materials;
- Adherence to professional standards and ethics of the industry by publishing houses;
- Civic organizations and how they relate to the industry;
- The influence of social media on the local industry;
- Readership/listenership or viewership trends;
- An analysis of major media players in the country and their influence;
- The use or marginalisation by the same media of the Constitutionally defined National Languages and implications for the future; and any other issues relevant to the research.

### **Research Framework**

Information gathering should include desk researches, interviews and any other techniques that can be used to gather information.

### **Target Group**

The target group that will constitute the core informants includes the following:

- Mass media services (registered or not registered);
- Government Departments;
- Education training institutions;
- Film industry players;
- Production houses;
- Marketing agencies;
- Media organisations in the civic sector;
- Media consumers;
- Students in the media field; and
- Any relevant organisations and individuals.

### **Project Outcomes**

The project should be able to come up with a detailed report on the media in Zimbabwe highlighting the following:

- A clear and nationally accepted definition of the term ‘media’ and components that make this industry;
- Gaps in the legal provisions dealing with the media;
- Proposals on how challenges facing the media could be addressed; and
- Proposals on policy interventions to assist in further improving the media environment.

## **Outputs**

The expected outputs includes the following:

- A detailed report ready for publication and distribution to all stakeholders. The report is expected to be a reference point to issues related to the media sector in Zimbabwe. It should be able to inform and shape policy interventions.

## **Estimated time of Research and Report Compilation**

The research and compilation of the report is estimated to take four months.

## **Deliverables.**

The researcher should deliver a two bound copies of the report together with a soft copy of the same.

## **Copyright**

All rights related to the report are with the ZMC.