



**SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA
COMMISSION
FINAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT**

Programme Title & Number

- Programme Title: Support to Capacity Development of the Independent Media Commission
- Programme Number: Joint Vision Programme 15
- MDTF Office Atlas Number: 00075875

Country, Locality(s), Thematic Area(s)²

Sierra Leone – Nationwide
Democratic Governance

Participating Organization(s)

UNDP, UNIPSIL

Implementing Partners

- Independent Media Commission (IMC)

Programme/Project Cost (US\$)

MDTF Fund Contribution:
• 244,569 US\$ (MDTF-CIDA)

Agency Contribution
• *by Agency (if applicable)*

Government Contribution
(if applicable)

Other Contribution (PBF)

TOTAL: 244,569 US\$

Programme Duration (months)

Overall Duration: 6
months

Start Date³: 22 July
2010

Original end date:
31 January 2011

Revised End Date:
(if applicable) : 30
March 2011

Operational Closure
Date⁴: 26 January
2011

Expected Financial
Closure Date: 30
March 2011

Final Programme/ Project Evaluation

Evaluation Completed

Yes No Date: _____

Evaluation Report - Attached

Yes No

Submitted By

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¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Priority Area for the Peacebuilding Fund; Sector for the UNDG ITF.

³ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MDTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MDTF Office GATEWAY](http://mdtf.undp.org) (<http://mdtf.undp.org>).

⁴ All activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MDTF programme have been completed. Agencies to advise the MDTF Office.

FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT

I. PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project was to further enhance the capacity of the Independent Media Commission (IMC) as one of the statutory democratic institutions in the country that is working towards the consolidation of peace. The project was designed to contribute to the following result for Programme 15 of the UN Joint Vision for Sierra Leone:

- **Strengthened Media-Monitoring Capacity** – IMC’s capacity strengthened to proactively ensure industry adherence to its standard for free and pluralistic media and to conduct reviews of cases of media abuses.

Programme 15 also supports democratic institutions in the country such as the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), Anti-Corruption Commission, African Peer Review Mechanism, and Parliament to secure democratic gains made through the successful 2007 and 2008 elections. The project’s objectives are fourfold:

1. Empower the IMC to embark on nationwide sensitisation of the population and government functionaries on the use of SLBC in order to ensure access for all;
2. Launch an effective monitoring of radio stations and newspapers to ensure compliance with regulations and Media Code of Practice in the lead up to the 2012 elections;
3. Support a training programme for media managers and reporters in ethics, legal norms and other obligations of broadcast media under Sierra Leone’s Media Code of Practice; and
4. Assist in the establishment of the second IMC satellite office in the northern district of Makeni.

The project set out to achieve the following outcomes:

- Government and civil society sensitised on the new SLBC IMC Monitoring Unit established in Freetown and satellite office established in Makeni
- Training exercises for radio editorial and management personnel in Freetown and districts conducted. With its mandate to promote pluralistic media throughout Sierra Leone and sanction cases of abuse by media institutions, the IMC has a crucial role to play in the promotion of peace and the consolidation of democratic governance in Sierra Leone. In March 2009, Sierra Leone faced its biggest threat to peace since the end of the conflict in 2002 when violence erupted in Freetown with clashes between the two main political parties, primarily as a result of political animosity sparked by the parties using their own party radio stations to denounce each other. The IMC responded to the incident by suspending the stations that played large roles in the violence and partisan broadcasting was condemned as the UN brokered a Joint Communiqué signed by all political parties. There is a continued need to raise the level of efficiency and professionalism of journalists throughout Sierra Leone through sustained training and an increase in IMC presence in the districts to strengthen media monitoring and facilitate constructive local political media dialogue. These activities are critical to ensuring a professional and neutral media in the lead up to, during and following the 2012 elections.

The UN Joint Vision has supported the IMC in its efforts to ensure fair, balanced and accurate news and information for all sectors of the population including marginalised groups such as women, youth and the disabled. In this context, since 2009, the UN has supported the IMC to conduct training exercises in Freetown as well as in the districts for journalists, reporters, and managers in ethics and

legal norms. The UN also supported the establishment of the IMC's first regional office in the southern district of Bo to increase the monitoring capacity of the institution in the regions.

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME/ PROJECT RESULTS

Through funding support from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), the IMC has been able to achieve the following significant results:

- The establishment of a second IMC satellite office in the northern district of Makeni in November 2010.
- Training for radio editorial and management personnel in Freetown and districts conducted.

Output 1: Government and civil society sensitised on the new SLBC.

Following the violence in Freetown in March 2009 between the two major political parties, the IMC suspended both party radio stations. All political parties then signed a Joint Communiqué brokered by the UN condemning partisan broadcasting and supporting the establishment of an independent national broadcaster. The Government of Sierra Leone recognised and embraced the concept that an independent broadcast service better serves the objectives of peacebuilding, good governance and progress than one which is controlled by partisan groups. Against this backdrop, the SLBC was created by law in January 2010, replacing the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) and UN Radio as the second independent public broadcaster in Africa. SLBC serves to empower an information hungry public as a truly independent broadcast institution owned by the public and managed using public funds. This para is all repetition

On April 1st 2010, SLBC broadcasting kicked off combining existing programming from SLBS and UN Radio into a single channel aired on UN Radio and SLBS frequencies. The IMC, with its mandate to promote a free and pluralistic media, carried out a public information campaign on the roles of the newly established SLBC. Also in April 2010, two seminars sponsored by the IMC with UNDP's support successfully provided space for questions and clarifications about SLBC including the role of SLBC in nation-building, depoliticisation of the media, the role and structure of the Board of Trustees, anticipated programmes, financial sustainability, and the SLBC Act. Through the seminars, government officials such as Parliamentarians and Ministers, civil society, local government, media, academic and the public were sensitised on the role of SLBC.

Output 2: IMC Monitoring Unit and satellite office established.

At the time of its establishment, like many new watchdog institutions, the IMC was faced with the urgent need to meet an increasing demand for the monitoring of local radio stations, particularly given the situation whereby misinformation provided by local media was a main contributing factor to political tension and violence in some parts of the country where IMC's presence had not reached. In 2010, the project therefore supported the IMC in establishing a second regional office in the Northern regional headquarter town of Makeni following the establishment of its first regional office in Bo with support from UNDP in 2009. Since the establishment of the two regional offices, tensions between political parties have eased considerably due to the offices' ability to facilitate constructive local media dialogue. The offices have also contributed to the improved capacity of the IMC to ensure that local media adheres to the Media Code of Practice throughout Sierra Leone to enable a more neutral, tolerant and free media.

The project also focused on addressing cross-cutting issues such as gender and helping to ensure that the informational needs of marginalised and disenfranchised segments of the population including women, youth, the elderly and children are met, especially in rural areas. Meeting these needs was

supported greatly by the establishment of the second regional IMC office. The presence of IMC in the regions significantly increased the capacity of the Commission to ensure that broadcasting by local radio stations was in compliance with the Media Code of Practice repetition and provided neutral, informative, educational and entertaining programming involving interaction and participation by all segments of the population.

Media monitoring ahead of the 2012 elections was one of the most important challenges for the IMC in 2011 and beyond. It is a complex issue that required strategic planning, sustained efforts and a consistent approach across the country. In order to respond to this tremendous challenge, the project supported the establishment and initial capacity building of the IMC's Monitoring, Research and Project Unit. A Consultant Director, charged with responsibilities of managing the Unit was recruited on an annual contract and assumed duties in January 2011. The Director is responsible for training the Unit staff as well as monitoring media activities across the country, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the media through constant tracking of media institutions, measuring various media content, creating a comprehensive database of information gathered through the monitoring process, and establishing standard formats of archiving and filing for the easy inputting and retrieval of information.

Output 3: Training for radio editorial and management personnel in Freetown and districts conducted.

The project supported IMC training for radio editors and managers on electoral coverage, ethics, legal norms and other obligations of the broadcast media under Sierra Leone's Media Code of Practice in Freetown and three regions. These training workshops were all conducted in 2011. The training contributed to enhanced capacities of radio editors and managers to provide professional and unbiased coverage of the 2012 election through their increased understanding and appreciation of the ethics, legal norms and regulatory obligations under the Media Code of practice.

From the outset of the project, UNDP Sierra Leone worked closely with UNIPSIL as the lead in providing technical and media management advisory services while UNDP focused on project management and financial management in line UNDP procedures.

III. EVALUATION & LESSONS LEARNED

Though no formal assessment or evaluation was conducted, project implementation processes were closely monitored by IMC staff in collaboration with the Project Manager through regular project meetings capturing and addressing all bottlenecks in implementation.

The timely sourcing, procurement and installation of electronic media monitoring software was a challenging aspect of the project, as it required the IMC to follow lengthy national procurement regulations. In view of delays, the IMC designed monitoring formats used by Field Media Monitors to collect data and report on trends in adherence to the Media Code of Practice.

One important lesson learned is related to IMC media monitoring. The Commission should continue to improve on timelines and scheduling in terms of Commissioner and staff inspections of various media houses and maintain proactive steps to explore infringements and execute requisite corrective measures.

IV. INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance (if any)	Source of Verification	Comments (if any)
Outcome 1: IMC Monitoring Capacity Enhanced							
Output 1. Monitoring Unit of the IMC established and capacitated to effectively monitor radio stations and newspapers and ensure compliance with regulations and the Media Code of Practice in the lead up to 2012 elections	<i>Indicator</i> % of media monitors able to properly use equipment and effectively monitor compliance What equipment is referred to here since we are still struggling with the procurement of the software? This was an indicator formulated at the project design stage and has been copied here.	No IMC Monitoring Unit	80% of monitors able to properly use equipment	All 25 trained monitors able to properly use equipment to monitor media		Progress Report	
Outcome 2: Training exercises for radio editorial and management personnel in Freetown and districts conducted							
Output 2. Media Managers and	<i>Indicator</i> Number of media journalists,	Some media journalists not aware of/do not	200 media journalists, reporters	Over 200 media journalists,		Workshop/Training Report	

reporters trained in ethics, legal norms and other obligations of broadcast media under the Sierra Leone Media Code of Practice.	reporters and managers trained.	practice Media Code of Practice	and managers trained	reports and managers trained			
Outcome 3: IMC monitoring unit and satellite office established							
Output 3. Second satellite office in Makeni in the Northern district of Bombali fully operational	<i>Indicators</i> - Number of staff in the field office - Regular field monitoring reports	2011 government budget/subvention does not make provision for staffing of the newly established field office	- 4 staff of the district office in Makeni receive salary for one year - Fully functional field office	- 4 staff of the district office in Makeni received salary for one year - Fully functional field office		Progress Report	