

Broadcasting, Voice, and Accountability

A Public Interest Approach to Policy, Law, and Regulation

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with

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Foreword

The World Bank has long recognized the role that media play in development. It has done so through advocating the importance of an independent press; providing training for journalists; and offering technical and financial assistance to commercial media organizations through its private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC). At present, there is an intention to broaden the focus to include broadcast media. With this guide the World Bank Institute seeks to support the development of an independent and diverse broadcasting sector that can contribute to the public interest.

Of paramount importance is the policy, legal, and regulatory framework that influences the shape, content, and social impacts of the broadcasting sector as a whole. This is the subject matter of the current guide. It includes not only protection of basic freedoms of expression, but also issues such as the structure and functioning of regulatory bodies, management of the radio-frequency spectrum, and licensing requirements that enable broadcasting diversity. Good practices from a wide range of countries are included. The enabling environment for broadcasting has significant consequences for governance and accountability: It can enable people in the developing world to become informed and empowered, or not.

Radio broadcasting can be very accessible, even for illiterate and semiliterate people in remote locations. It can influence people's understanding of their context, interests, and view of themselves. In the many places where listening to the radio is a group activity, its content easily provokes comments and discussion. Often issues that previously could not be discussed become permissible as people refer to what they have heard. The social impacts can be pervasive and profound.

Broadcasting also provides platforms for publicly airing concerns, raising questions with experts on the air, and solving problems. Community radio programs, for example, often involve the whole listening audience in discussing matters important to them, in their local languages. This in turn strengthens people's ability and confidence in framing and analyzing issues, engaging in informed debate, and pressing local officials for actions. This process helps people to

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identify and grasp opportunities, address collective problems, and resist manipulation. It also strengthens people's resolve to make their government accountable and strengthens their outspokenness against abuses. From Ghana to Indonesia, groups have gone "on the air" and named officials who have stolen public funds or not delivered a long-promised road—and they have seen an active response. Such public condemnation makes officials change their calculus of their prerogatives and their responsibilities.

Broadcasting is a potent vehicle for scaling up and embedding civic engagement in the life of poor constituencies in developing countries—and in the expectations of government officials.

Freedom of information and expression and a robust mix of broadcasting ownership and uses—commonly referred to as commercial, public service, and community broadcasting—are critically important to develop and sustain an informed, engaged society. With this book, we show that improving the enabling environment for the broadcasting sector is important development terrain, where country-specific analysis and assistance are long overdue.

Rakesh Nangia
Acting Vice President, World Bank Institute, 2001–2007

Acknowledgments

Broadcasting, Voice, and Accountability: A Public Interest Approach to Policy, Law, and Regulation has been under discussion and development since 2003. It is an outgrowth of the World Bank Institute's program supporting Civic Engagement, Empowerment, and Respect for Diversity (CEERD), including Voice and Media Development. Over time, it has also benefited from collaboration with experts in fields of governance and accountability in developing countries, development communications, and telecommunications policy. Government officials and nongovernmental stakeholders have used iterative drafts to support their analyses of broadcasting policy and regulation in a number of developing countries and to inform their reform proposals.

In the first instance, the project received financial support from the Office of the World Bank President, James D. Wolfensohn (1995–2005). Since then, it has received grants from the World Bank–Netherlands Partnership Program, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Beaverbrook Foundation.

Kreszentia Duer, New Business Development Leader at the World Bank Institute and manager of the CEERD Program, initiated the guide project in an effort to promote the integration of media and broadcasting policy into the development field. From the outset the guide has been structured to present good practices from around the world in a coherent policy landscape that could significantly improve governance, communications access, and opportunities for disadvantaged peoples. To this end, Duer formed and led the team; shaped the guide's relevance to development issues, policy, and practice; and guided the project to completion. At several stages she invited peer reviews to ensure that the guide would reflect a collective perspective of senior specialists in diverse parts of the World Bank and among a broad range of international experts.

Steve Buckley, President of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, and Toby Mendel, Law Programme Director of Article 19, built on extensive work they and others have done in the field to research and write much of the substance of Parts II and III of this guide. Without their efforts, and Steve Buckley's commitment to

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this project from the outset, the guide would not have been possible. Seán Ó Siochrá, founder of and spokesperson for the Campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society and a Director of NEXUS Research, heroically produced the final edited version of the text, with considerable new material in Part I. Craig Hammer (CEERD Program, The World Bank) authored the guide's bibliographical annex and greatly facilitated the publication of this guide.

The project's expert advisers, Professors Monroe E. Price (Director of the Center for Global Communication Studies [CGCS] at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania) and Marc Raboy (Beaverbrook Chair in Ethics, Media and Communications at McGill University), came on board in April 2006. The Bank contracted CGCS to act as consultant in bringing the project to fruition. Susan Abbott, Senior Research Coordinator at CGCS, was indispensable in steering the consultancy process. The project also gained valuable assistance from Sylvie Beauvais and Libby Morgan at the CGCS. The advice and consultation provided by the Annenberg School and McGill provided the World Bank Institute (WBI) and the guide's authors with creative input and critical reflection necessary to bring the guide to completion.

This guide benefited greatly from four stages of internal and external peer reviews and roundtable discussions. These occurred, first, at the early stages of conception; second, at a conference to review the full manuscript at Cherkley Court in the United Kingdom, which was followed by submission of expert papers from participants; third, at the World Bank's formal peer review and decision meeting on the economic and sector work manuscript; and fourth, at the external peer review requested by the publisher. We would like to acknowledge those involved, as follows.

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A key moment in structuring and deepening the manuscript was the conference on Media, Voice and Development held at Cherkley Court in Surrey (UK) on July 12, 2006. Organized by McGill and Annenberg in partnership with the Beaverbrook Foundation, this conference brought together twenty international experts to discuss and provide feedback on a preliminary version of the guide. We thank the Beaverbrook Foundation for generously hosting the conference, as well as Dean Christopher Manfredi (McGill Faculty of Arts) and Camilla Leigh (McGill Development Office) for their support. In addition, we thank the following people for their contributions at the workshop: Mavic Cabrera-Balleza (Senior Program Associate, International Women's Tribune Centre); Peter de Costa (Consultant, London); Stuti Khemani (Economist, Development Research Group, World Bank); Elizabeth McCall (Civil Society and Access to Information Policy Adviser, Oslo Governance Centre, United Nations Development Programme); Lumko Mtimde (Chief Executive Officer, Media Diversity and Development Agency of South Africa); Jamal Ed-dine Naji (UNESCO Chair in Public and Community Communication, Institut, Supérieur de l'information et de la Communication, Morocco); Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu (Executive Director, the Center for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka); Diana Senghor (Director, the Panos Institute of West Africa); James Deane (Head, Policy Development, BBC World Service Trust and former Managing Director of the Communication for Social Change Consortium); and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (Senior Lecturer, Journalism Studies, Cardiff University).

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