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# Long-term financial support for Ukrainian media and journalists

White Paper

This White Paper, crafted jointly with Ukrainian media organisations and support entities and at their request, appeals to donors, policymakers, and other stakeholders in advocating for long-term financial support for Ukrainian media.

## A holistic strategy to foster a resilient, independent, and effective media sector

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, immediate emergency assistance, such as the procurement of alternative power supplies to enable operations in the face of electricity cuts, has been invaluable in ensuring that Ukrainian media continue to provide life-saving information to the people of Ukraine. But myriad challenges - such as the loss of income as advertising and subscriptions ceased, the loss of personnel as staff joined the war effort, and a loss of audiences following mass displacement - have left Ukrainian media in a constant state of flux, focused on immediate needs rather than long-term vision.

As the war enters a new phase, and Ukrainians look towards reconstruction and recovery, Ukrainian media must now build the necessary resilience, infrastructure, and capacity required to navigate the complex and evolving landscape. The need for long-term financial support thus grows increasingly important: to provide the stability and resources necessary for media organisations to devise new business strategies; invest in quality, ethical, and independent journalism; and reconnect with audiences so that they can continue to serve their vital role of informing citizens, stimulating dialogue, and holding the government accountable.

To ensure that Ukrainian media move from mere survival to long-term vitality, we propose a comprehensive strategy encompassing the following five pillars:

1. Innovative funding mechanisms
2. Prioritisation of local-level media
3. Constructive enabling environment
4. Professional development
5. Media literacy

This holistic strategy aims to foster a resilient, independent, and effective media sector integral to Ukraine's ongoing development and recovery.

## Why long-term financial support for Ukrainian media is needed?

Long-term financial support for Ukrainian media would meet several critical needs:

- **Adapting to a Changed Media Landscape:** The media market in Ukraine has been profoundly impacted by war, including the loss of resources, a shift to remote operations, the emotional toll of frontline reporting, increasing audience reliance on online content, and the disappearance of many traditional outlets. Long-term funding will allow media organisations to adapt strategically to these changes, ensuring their sustainability and relevance in the evolving landscape.
- **Providing Critical Oversight:** Along with civil society, media play a pivotal role as watchdogs in ensuring government transparency. Long-term support will enable media organisations to effectively fulfil this crucial function, for example, in monitoring the implementation of reconstruction projects, especially given the substantial funds involved.
- **Promoting Civic Engagement:** Journalism that encourages civic engagement will also be crucial during Ukraine's recovery process. Informed citizens are more likely to actively participate in shaping their communities and holding authorities accountable. Rather than contributing to distrust and disillusionment, solutions-based journalism can provide actionable steps for the public to respond constructively to the findings of investigations.
- **Ensuring Media Pluralism:** Equitable distribution of financial support across the entire country will preserve media pluralism and avoid regional disparities in access to reliable information. This includes attention to diversity and inclusion, ensuring that gender, age, dis/ability, language, ethnicity, sexual identity, displacement, and other key considerations are respected and reflected in producing content and serving audiences.
- **Guarding Against Media Capture:** Though the oligarchs who have traditionally played a role in sustaining media outlets appear to demonstrate reduced interest in maintaining media as a tool of influence, such capture may resurface in the future. Sustained financial support can help organisations explore long-term structural solutions and monetisation models that can prevent undue influence and maintain media independence.

## What long-term financial support for Ukrainian media could look like

We, the undersigned, propose a comprehensive and strategic approach that addresses various critical aspects of the media landscape and aims to ensure the independence, sustainability, and effectiveness of Ukrainian media over the next five to ten years:

- 1. Pursue Innovative Funding Mechanisms:** We recommend the development of a well-defined and transparent funding framework, such as the establishment of a Ukrainian Media Support Fund with international donor involvement. Such a fund could serve as a centralised mechanism for equitably channelling financial support to media organisations. Instead of project-based assistance, funding should provide institutional support, aim to align with market principles, consider the size and quality of audiences, and reward outlets based on reach, impact and adherence to ethical standards.
- 2. Prioritise Local-Level Media:** Local media play a vital role in post-conflict reconstruction, providing context-specific coverage and promoting transparency at the grassroots level. This includes the importance of restoring the connection between local media and audiences in the de-occupied territories. Allocating funding and resources to support local media outlets and enhancing their reporting capabilities will contribute significantly to rebuilding trust and facilitating healing.
- 3. Foster a Constructive Enabling Environment:** Engagement in advocacy efforts to sustain and further improve the media development environment requires a long-term strategic approach that is only possible with long-term planning and long-term funding. This includes the importance of monitoring the implementation of Ukraine's new media law and the protection of media freedom in line with international standards. Initiatives should also support co- and self-regulation mechanisms with the aim of promoting and supporting ethical journalism. In addition, advocacy efforts should encourage the parliament and government of Ukraine to provide tax incentives, exemptions from registration fees, and other forms of assistance that can significantly ease the financial burden on media organisations.
- 4. Support Professional Development:** Capacity development and professionalisation remain essential for rebuilding the Ukrainian media market, particularly as newsrooms replace departed staff and integrate returning veterans. Training needs include areas such as ethical standards, investigative journalism, digitalisation, team management, and resource diversification, as well as strategies for understanding and reaching divided audiences in liberated territories. Along with training, we suggest partnerships between Ukrainian and international media entities to promote knowledge exchange and collaborative initiatives, for example, in producing multimedia formats or exploring new distribution methods.
- 5. Promote Media Literacy:** Given the pervasiveness of Russian propaganda and the vulnerabilities to dis- and misinformation, assistance must extend beyond media organisations to support audience needs as well. Building on lessons learned from years of previous efforts, national initiatives should aim to improve media and digital literacy and help audiences critically evaluate and engage with media content (for example, strengthening the public's ability to recognize hidden advertising, spot the promotion of political interests, and monitor adherence to ethical standards).

## Background and Context

Within 48 hours after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Global Forum for Media Development convened the first of its regular coordination meetings among media support organisations and Ukrainian counterparts, which among other results led to the [Perugia Declaration for Ukraine](#). Now, 1.5 years later, a compelling consensus has emerged: the necessity of transitioning from short-term emergency aid to sustained, forward-thinking programmatic and institutional support.

Several media development and journalism support organizations have signed this call for robust support, which aims to ensure that the Ukrainian media community continues to contribute to the resilience of the Ukrainian public and the recovery of the nation. For the complete list of signatories, please visit <https://gfmd.info/briefings/long-term-support-ukrainian-media>.

## Relevant literature

- [Perugia Declaration for Ukraine \(2022\)](#) - More than 200 media support organisations drafted, signed, and promoted the [Perugia Declaration for Ukraine](#), which was launched in April 2022. The declaration, which has been translated into 10 languages, called for increased support of independent media and journalists in Ukraine, with policy recommendations aimed at donors, media, media assistance organisations, policymakers, advertisers and tech platforms. The declaration was updated at the 2023 [International Journalism Festival](#) in Perugia.
- [The State of Local News in Ukraine \(2023\)](#) - In this study, the Media Development Foundation summarises the year of the great war and documents the adaptive mechanisms of newsrooms in response to challenging crisis working conditions.
- [Frontline Local Media Report \(2023\)](#) - This 2023 survey was conducted by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine with support by Fondation Hirondelle and the Institute of Regional Press and Information (IRMI Ukraine).
- [Philanthropy for Ukraine \(2023\)](#) - On 28 April, the Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea), in collaboration with GFMD, organised the 13th session of "Philanthropy for Ukraine," focusing on journalism in the context of the war. During the session, four Ukrainian media experts shared their insights on the challenges and opportunities for international donors in supporting media in Ukraine.
- [National Journalism Funds \(2023\)](#) - This policy paper produced by GFMD's [International Media Policy and Advisory Centre \(GFMD IMPACT\)](#) looks at the emergence around the world of 'national funds for journalism' (NFJs) as a particular instrument for providing strategic, long-term financial support to independent public interest media and media sectors and ecosystems.
- [Transforming Media Development – Recommendations for effective funding and collaboration \(2023\)](#) - This study, based on desk research as well as online interviews with GFMD members from Eastern Europe, Asia and South America, documents the challenges that GFMD's members face on a daily basis in their attempts to raise funds and meet donor expectations on reporting and accountability.
- [Media Reform amid Political Upheaval \(2022\)](#) - This report, by the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), discusses lessons in media reform amid political upheaval in Burma, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Ukraine.