

# AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER

A home-grown analysis of the  
media landscape in Africa



## ZIMBABWE 2020



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The African Media Barometer is a perception index. The findings, interpretations and conclusions reported are those of panelists drawn from civil society and media organisations for the purposes of conducting the AMB, and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *fesmedia* Africa, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung or the Media Institute of Southern Africa.



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# The African Media Barometer

The African Media Barometer (AMB) is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. Unlike other press surveys or media indices the AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on home-grown criteria derived from African Protocols and Declarations such as the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (2002) by the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. The instrument was jointly developed by *fesmedia* Africa, the media project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Africa, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2004.

The AMB is an analytical exercise to measure the media situation in a given country which at the same time serves as a practical lobbying tool for media reform. Its results are presented to the public of the respective country to push for an improvement of the media situation using the AU-Declaration and other African standards as benchmarks. The recommendations of the AMB reports are then integrated into the work of the 20 country offices of the FES in sub-Saharan Africa and into the advocacy efforts of other local media organisations such as MISA.

## Methodology and Scoring System

Every three to four years a panel of 10-12 experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. For 1½ days they discuss the national media environment according to 39 predetermined indicators. The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who also edits the AMB report.

After the discussion of one indicator, panel members allocate their individual scores to that respective indicator in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator

In 2009, 2013 and 2019 some indicators were replaced to align with changes in the media landscape. Consequently, in some instances, the comparison of indicators of previous reports is not applicable (n/a), as the indicator is new or has been amended considerably.

The sum of all individual indicator scores is divided by the number of panel members to determine the average score for each indicator. These average indicator scores are added up to form average sector scores.

### **Outcome**

The final, qualitative report summarises the general content of the discussion and provides the average score for each indicator. Panellists are not quoted by name in the report, in order to protect them from possible repercussions. The reports can be used as a tool for possible political discussion on media reform.

In countries where English is not the official language, the report is published in a bilingual edition.

In facilitating the AMB, the FES and MISA only serve as a convener of the panel and as guarantor of the methodology. The content of the discussion and the report is owned by the panel of local experts and does not represent or reflect the view of FES or MISA.

By the end of 2020 the AMB had been successfully completed 121 times in 32 African countries, in some of them for the sixth time already.

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*See above 32 AMB Countries (2005-2019)*

# African Media Barometer Zimbabwe 2020

## Summary

This national assessment of the media environment in Zimbabwe took place a mere two months before the novel coronavirus hit the country, sowing devastation in its wake and aggravating the already deteriorating social, political and economic decline.

In Zimbabwe, there is renewed hope that, despite the difficult circumstances, things will turn out for the better. There is now ongoing engagement between media and government, and a departure from the animosity and relationships of suspicion that existed previously.

Government briefings are now open to all, and invitations to government functions are generally issued to all journalists and not just the state media. The current Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, is noted for being proactive in engaging with journalists, and there have even been cases of the Minister intervening to prevent threatened arrests of journalists.

However, although there are arguably more freedoms in the country, there has also been more repression, including the shutdown of internet access in 2019. There are also continued government threats of clamp downs on comments made in the social media.

Further, despite over five years of tabling draft bills and holding numerous discussions on media freedom, the reality is that not much has occurred in terms of real change. The current exercise of repealing the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (an act which was perceived to infringe on journalistic freedoms) is viewed by some with sceptical eyes. The fear is that the provisions of the Act will essentially be relaunched, but under a different name.

A review of the Broadcasting Services Act (amended in 2016) is still ongoing; and although Zimbabwe now has more radio stations, there is a lack of diversity in the ownership of these stations and the content still reflects the hand of government. There are also continued calls for the establishment of community radio and commercial television stations.

Citizen journalism has grown, but this has created challenges such as the increase in 'fake news.' The instantaneous nature of social media has also become a threat to the slower deadlines of traditional print media. There are now numerous websites that are not accountable, as well as sites that simply aggregate content and do no reporting of their own.



The difficult economic situation in the country has affected the operations and sustainability of the media, leading to shrinking newsrooms and the hiring of “greenhorns” over more experienced journalists. There is also a detachment between training institutions and the media industry, as well as a lack of coordination between the training institutions themselves.

*The panel discussion took place in Kadoma Rainbow Hotel, Zimbabwe from 22-24 January 2020*



# SECTOR 1:

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted

# 1.1 Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is guaranteed in the constitution and supported by other pieces of legislation

There are specific provisions relating to freedom of expression and media in the constitution.

Chapter 4 (article 61.1) notes that every person has the right to freedom of artistic expression; and article 61.2 notes that “every person is entitled to freedom of the media”.

However, there is ‘a crisis of the constitution versus constitutionalism.’ Even though legislation on freedom of expression and of the media exists, there is a lack of substance and implementation of the Constitutional provisions.

An example is the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which is currently undergoing a process of ‘unbundling’, whereby access to information, media regulation and privacy issues would be envisioned as pieces of separate legislation rather than a single act.

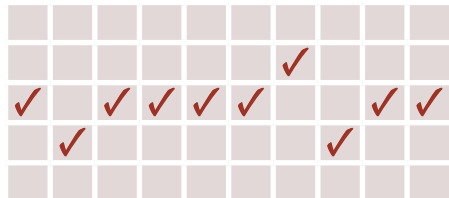
However, the Act still stands in law and has not been changed, six-and-a-half years after the new constitution was enacted. So, although legislation exists, it does not effectively ‘support’ the freedoms outlined in the constitution.

Revised legislation is currently in the proposal stage. With current discussions on issues surrounding access to information, there need to be broader discussions of, for instance, the issue of access to private information, which is not mentioned in current legislation.

## Scores:

### Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



### Average score:

Score of previous years:

**3.1**

2006: 1.3; 2008: 1.8; 2010: 1.6; 2012: 2.3; 2015: 3

## 1.2 The right to freedom of expression is practised and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear

Although there are new faces in government, the legal system remains the same. People, including journalists, have been harassed for expressing themselves and citizens who tweet (or even retweet) messages that are critical of government have been arrested.

After November 2017, there was an element of openness, and people were willing to criticise and engage government. However, since the general internet shutdown in 2019, people have been feeling restricted in the manner in which they express themselves. Even when the internet is operating, there are ‘brigades’ of people who will ‘feed and terrorise your comments on social media.’ There can therefore be consequences and a backlash to what is said, both in the private and public spheres.

The new regime has been more subtle in dealing with dissent. There has been a drop, for instance, in the number of journalists arrested; and although there are reports of harassment, this is not as direct or blatant. “The regime is doing things more subtly than before.”

It is difficult to get people to respond to critical questions in rural areas. People are sensitive about how the information might be used. Respondents will say, for example, “you can quote me, but don’t use my name.” State sanction, along with criminal law, is a reality.

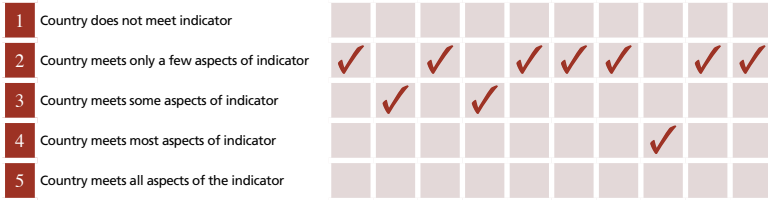
Women, in particular, are fearful of expressing themselves – especially in the online space – for fear of backlash and internet trolls. Zimbabwe remains a “deeply patriarchal state”. A majority of women will often first seek consent from their husbands before they participate in discussions.

There have been instances of journalists being arrested, but in some cases, the circumstances are somewhat controversial. One journalist who alleged that police had ignored a petition from citizens later admitted that he had personally placed the petition in a dustbin in order to make it seem as if the police themselves had thrown it away.

But there have been other cases where restrictions have been more ominous. A comedian, for example, was attacked for mocking President Mnangagwa. The case has still not been resolved.

## Scores:

### Individual scores:



### Average score:

2.4

Score of previous years:

2006: 1.1; 2008: 1.3; 2010: 1.2; 2012: 2.2; 2015: 2.6

## 1.3 There are NO legal restrictions to freedom of expression or laws that interfere with the functioning of the media. (e.g. official secret, libel acts and legal requirements)

In practice, there are laws which restrict the media. These include AIPPA, which regulates the right to establish media. This law is qualified by the constitution, in that it states that establishing media should be subject to licencing requirements; but the government is interpreting this to mean that licencing involves imposing restrictions.

The AIPPA Act places limitations on ownership. The new Broadcasting Services Bill also has these restrictions, including a proposed maximum 20% ownership of a broadcasting service by a non-citizen. The Companies Act, which includes an indigenisation clause, also places thresholds on ownership.

The Official Secrets Act remains in effect and must be signed by those working for the state, restraining them from revealing information to the media. The Censorship and Entertainments Control Act has also been used to ban theatre productions seen as anti-government.

Acts are still in place that could be used against the media and, in particular, to compromise journalistic sources. The Interception of Communications Act allows the government to intercept communications, and can be used to force an individual to hand over passwords for a computer or cell phone. In addition, it is a criminal offence for an Internet Service Provider to inform subscribers that they are being monitored or intercepted. This is in contrast to the United States, for example, where every service provider has to issue an annual transparency report.

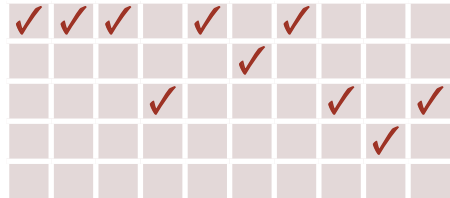
On a positive note, there have been instances of laws successfully being challenged. The offence of ‘insulting the office of the President’, which embraced criminal defamation and was often used against the media, was struck down by

the Constitutional Court in 2016 as unconstitutional. The recent shutdown of internet services was also a misapplication of a legal provision. The Interception of Communications Act does not authorise this, and the courts therefore overruled this action.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.0**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: n/a; 2012: n/a; 2015: 1.8

## 1.4 Government honours regional and international instruments on freedom of expression and freedom of the media

Zimbabwe has signed all of the relevant AU and SADC instruments. Where there is a requirement to domesticate the legislation, this has been done, in line with the requirements of the constitution.

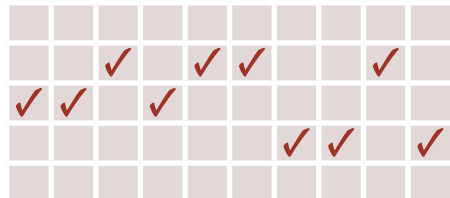
Enforcement and reporting mechanisms have also been achieved in terms of compliance.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights made certain recommendations after the bombing of the Daily News’ printing press in 2001, but to date, the government has failed to implement those recommendations.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.9**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1; 2012: 1.6; 2015: 2.4

## 1.5 Print publications are not required to obtain permission to publish from state authorities

The AIPPA Act provides for the registration of media houses with the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). In addition, media houses are subject to the jurisdiction of the ZMC.

However, the ZMC is currently conflicted. According to the constitution, it is supposed to be a guardian to protect the public against abuses, but the AIPPA Act designates the ZMC as a regulator. There is therefore an inconsistency between the constitution and the Act.

One panellist praised the ZMC as being ‘one of the best and friendliest print administrations in Southern Africa.’ But there are newspapers that are registered but not operational. ‘Some of these “briefcase” newspapers only appear towards elections.’

There is a registration fee of ZWL120 (approximately USD7 on the black market; USD5 at the interbank rate). Compared to television and radio, there are no hindering obstacles for registration of print media.

Additionally, media houses are required to give 3% of their proceeds to the ZMC for the Media Development Fund, meant to provide media training, especially for community newspapers. However, to date, no organisation has remitted that money and government is reluctant to enforce this requirement.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:

|   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | Country does not meet indicator               | ✓ |   |   |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |   |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Country meets only a few aspects of indicator |   |   |   |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |   |   |
| 3 | Country meets some aspects of indicator       |   |   | ✓ |  |   | ✓ |  |   |  |  |   |   |
| 4 | Country meets most aspects of indicator       |   | ✓ |   |  |   |   |  |   |  |  | ✓ |   |
| 5 | Country meets all aspects of the indicator    |   |   |   |  |   |   |  | ✓ |  |  |   |   |

#### Average score:

2.4

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1; 2012: 2.1; 2015: 1.3

## 1.6 Confidential sources of information are protected by law and/or the courts

There is a constitutional provision on the protection of the confidentiality of journalists’ sources of information (section 61.2). In addition, the Interception of Communications Act stresses that communications are private and that interception of such, outside the framework of the Act, is illegal.

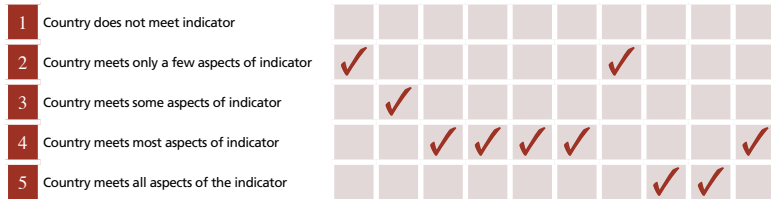
Despite suspicions that the illegal interception of communications is taking place, there have been no recorded cases of people being prosecuted for this.

One case against an online publication was labelled by the courts as “commercial bullying”, after a rival company sought to obtain commercial information. ‘It was a case of twisting the law for commercial reasons.’

There was also a case in which Trevor Ncube, who had written about an issue before it had been presented to parliament, was summoned to appear before a Parliamentary Portfolio committee and forced to reveal his source. Even under the new constitution, this committee can be convened as a court and has similar powers.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:



#### Average score:

3.7

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 1.2; 2010: 1.4; 2012: 3; 2015: 4

## 1.7 Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to the public

Access to public information is guaranteed both in the constitution and the AIPPA Act. The new Access to Information Bill, which looks at public and private information, provides for the creation of information officer positions, along with clear information access procedures.

However, the current ease of access to certain information is debatable. It involves ‘a lot of hoops to jump over’, and public officials feel they can withhold information by using the Official Secrets Act as an excuse.

There is also the problem of declassification of information. Forty years after the war, there is still material that cannot be accessed.



There is also the challenge of institutional reform, whereby those working in institutions still have a mindset of withholding information, as opposed to freely providing it to the public. The army, as well as certain ministries, will demand that journalists send them written questions for the information they are seeking, but can take two weeks or more to respond to these questions.

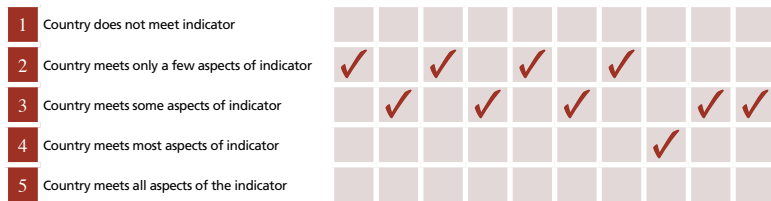
Websites are poorly maintained. The Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), for example, at the time of this AMB did not have a comprehensive website where people could get information about establishing a radio station.

There is also limited information in braille for the visually impaired; and those who are hearing impaired and require sign language interpretation are often cut off from receiving relevant information.

There are also examples of “information dumping”. The budget of the City of Harare runs to hundreds of pages, but getting the focused information required can be a challenge.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**



**Average score:**

**2.7**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1.1; 2008: 1.2; 2010: 1.9; 2012: 2.5; 2015: 2.6

## 1.8 Websites, blogs and other digital platforms are not required to register with or obtain permission from state authorities

There is no specific legal requirement for the registration of websites and blogs.

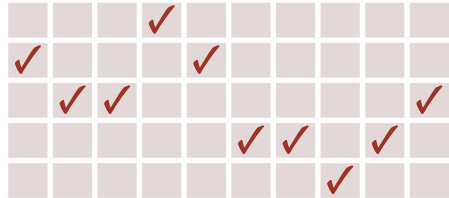
The Broadcasting Services Act contains provisions to regulate these “non-frequency services”, but until now, they have never been used. Section 7 of the Act talks about ‘narrowcasting’ and ‘webcasting’ and the legislation states that such media need to be licenced.

In 2018, BAZ published an advertisement requiring people with broadcasting services ‘not requiring a frequency’ to register. These included ‘web on demand’ and ‘net casting’ services, among others. As a result, some media houses – Alpha Media and Zimpapers, for example – have now received a webcasting licence.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**3.1**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 5; 2012: 4.9; 2015: 5

**1.9 The state does not seek to block or filter internet content unless in accordance with laws that provide for restrictions that serve a legitimate interest and are necessary in a democratic society, and which are applied by independent courts**

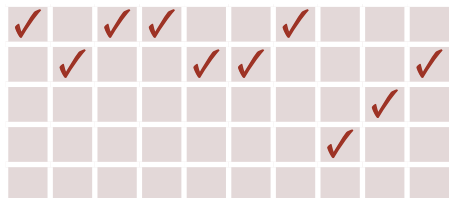
During January 2019, a restriction was placed on specific internet services, followed by a total shut down for a period of 4 days. In justifying the shutdown, government applied incorrect legislation (i.e. the Interception of Communications Act of 2007).

In 2019, there was also an attempt to block access to certain social media platforms at educational institutions. This was a result of an order from the institutions themselves; and is an indication of the increasing militarisation of state institutions, including higher educational institutions.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**1.9**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 2.9; 2012: 3.9; 2015: 2.8

## 1.10 Civil society in general and media lobby groups actively advance the cause of media freedom

The fact that the government is now actively talking about media reform can be seen as a result of the proactive efforts of civil society, particular on issues of media freedom and advocacy. The current plans to unbundle the AIPPA legislation, as well as the crafting of media and film industry policies, is a direct result of civil society initiatives.

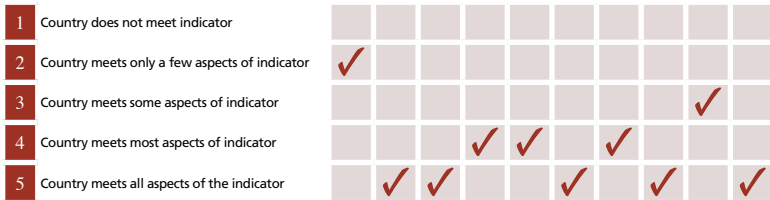
Media organisations have also engaged directly with the police to craft a better relationship. These relations are now much improved, again, as a result of lobbying by civil society organisations such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) - Zimbabwe, and the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ).

Alerts and awareness-raising initiatives on social media from these civil society organisations are having a positive impact. There have also been court challenges to the internet shut down as well as the constitutionality of the criminal defamation law.

Media practitioners have also played a role in this process, but there needs to be more co-operation. 'Practitioners don't talk as much about their issues as they should. As journalists, if we don't speak out on these issues, who is going to speak for you?'

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:



#### Average score:

4.2

Score of previous years:

2006: 2.5; 2008: 3.1; 2010: 4.2; 2012: 3.5; 2015: 4.7

## 1.11 Media legislation evolves from meaningful consultations among state institutions, citizens and interest groups

Although there is an Inter-ministerial committee that drafts legislation, the information given to them by civil society is not often used. The outcome from government, in contrast to the input from civil society – is often disappointing.

'There is no sincerity on the part of government.'

There have been some consultations, including soliciting views from the provinces; but the parliamentary portfolio committees, themselves, do not have control over the final bill. So, in many cases, the consultations are not meaningful because the final product is not reflective of what took place on the ground.

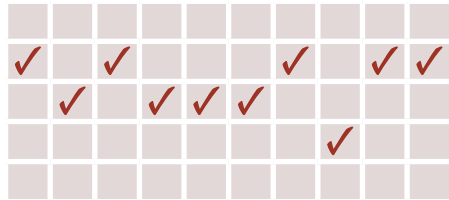
There are also terms of reference for inter-ministerial committees – i.e., to deal with specific constitutional matters. Therefore, anything not related to the constitution will not be included.

There is, therefore, a need for civil society to understand the operations of these committees in order to have effective interventions.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.6**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.6; 2012: 2.1; 2015: 2.1

**Overall Score for Sector 1:**

**2.8**



## SECTOR 2:

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability

## 2.1 A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, internet, mobile phones) is accessible and affordable to the public

Information is generally accessible, but whether it is affordable is debatable – especially in terms of broadcasting and the internet.

There is also the important issue of language. The constitution recognises 16 languages, but everything is mainstreamed in English and, to a lesser extent, Ndebele/Shona. Other languages (including braille and sign language) are sidelined.

In print media, there has been an increase in what has come to be known as the “highway newspaper” – one which is dropped strategically along the highways, but are not distributed further, because of the difficulties of obtaining fuel for deliveries.

New titles such as *Business Times and Business Connect* have been launched; but generally, copy sales have gone down due to the challenges of affordability in a difficult economy. Readers have to ask the question, ‘Do I buy this newspaper for \$15, or do I buy bread?’

Older readers still like the printed publications, but can’t afford them; and ‘millennials just don’t read newspapers.’ There is also a lack of cash in circulation, and newspapers still rely on cash sales.

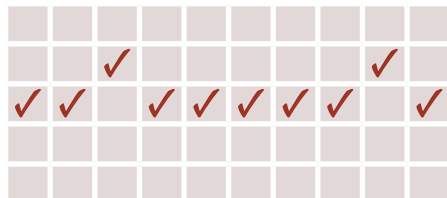
Ironically, soon after midnight, newspaper content is available on the websites of their respective media houses, even before the publication has appeared on the streets. Internet penetration is 62% but 83% have access through mobile phones (mainly using apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook). Internet costs are high. 1 GB data costs approximately ZWL190 (US\$11.10).

There has been a proliferation of private radio stations since 2015, with new stations such as Classic 263, Skyz Metro FM and Breeze FM. However, there aren’t any truly independent radio stations, and most have ties to the ruling party and dominant media houses. ‘These are cronies of people in the establishment.’

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



#### Average score:

Score of previous years:

#### 2.8

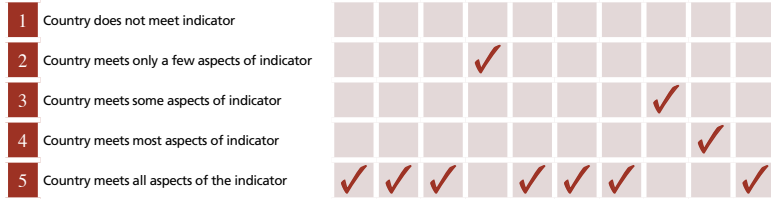
2006: 1.3; 2008: 2.3; 2010: 2.1; 2012: 2.9; 2015: 3.2

## 2.2 The public access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities

There are no restrictions to domestic and international media sources. Many viewers in Zimbabwe watch DSTV channels or free-to-air channels from South Africa. Overseas newspapers can also be freely accessed online.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:



#### Average score:

**4.4**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1.2; 2008: 2.8; 2010: 2.3; 2012: 2.8; 2015: 3.6

## 2.3 The editorial independence of print and online media published by a public authority is protected adequately against undue political interference

Over 20 newspapers are owned by Zimpapers, who also own an online radio and television station (ZTN).

Although it is a ‘public company’, the fact is that the Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services is ultimately in control of Zimpapers. In practice, it is, therefore, a heavily state-controlled establishment and this control encroaches on editorial independence.

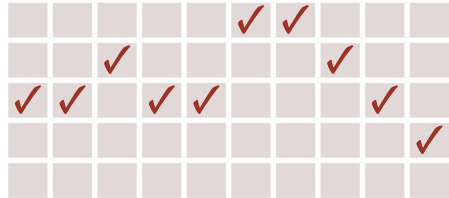
One editor was allegedly ‘fired by the [former] First Lady’, and there seems to be regular coverage of stories concerning the First Lady or Vice President. ‘That is the extent of editorial capture.’

However, a contrary view was expressed that the placing of stories at Zimpapers is always the prerogative of the editor, and the reality on the ground is that very few ministers would interfere in the running of a newspaper.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.5**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 1.1; 2010: 1.1; 2012: 1.5; 2015: 2.4

## 2.4 Transparency of news media ownership is guaranteed by law and enforced

The law (AIPPA) requires disclosure of media ownership. However, the real ownership, and whether owners are connected to certain politicians, is more difficult to penetrate. It was claimed that ‘everyone who owns a media house is linked to ZANU-PF.’

Media ownership is, therefore, a complex issue and this creates a dilemma for independent reporting by journalists.

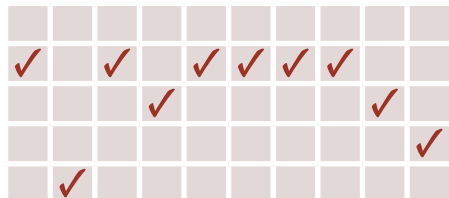
Even if you check the company registry for the ownership of a media company, you might not find the file, the information will be missing or out of date, or you will be informed that the company registry files have not been updated. There are also some “security files” which cannot be accessed, even though these are supposed to be public documents.

The Mass Media Trust (which owns 51% of Zimpapers) has an opaque ownership and it is not clear where the actual ownership lies.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.7**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: n/a; 2012: n/a; 2015: 2



## 2.5 Adequate legislation/regulation seeks to promote competition and prevent media concentration and monopolies

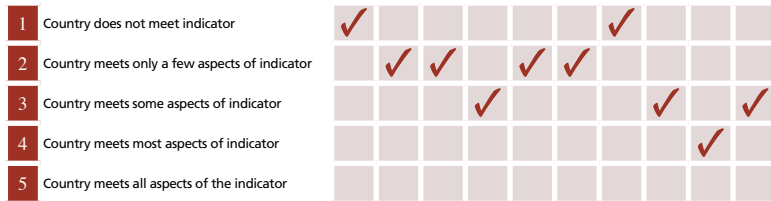
There is a Competition and Tariff Commission which seeks to promote competition. However, sometimes there seem to be attempts to actively stifle competition. One example is the Indigenisation Act, which legislates ownership only by locals, completely excluding foreign participation and competition.

Furthermore, the provision on cross-ownership has been removed, meaning that newspapers can now also own radio and television stations without restriction. The current Broadcasting Services Act restricts cross-ownership, but enforcement has been a challenge.

The licences of internet service providers are extremely broad, covering the entire country. Therefore, the cost of such a licence is prohibitive, restricting many small potential providers from being able to apply.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:



#### Average score:

2.3

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 1.1; 2010: 1.5; 2012: 3; 2015: 1.4

## 2.6 Government promotes a diverse media landscape with economically sustainable and independent media outlets

Although there are over 200 licenced media outlets in Zimbabwe, many are not operational. There is also little political will and few resources to start new media outlets or to support more diverse media landscapes.

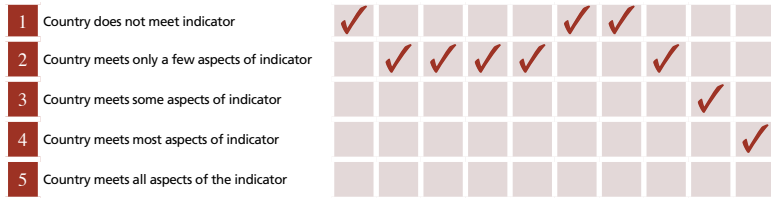
Foreign ownership of radio and television stations is discouraged because the government maintains that broadcasting airwaves ‘belong to the people of Zimbabwe’ and, as a strategic resource, must therefore be protected from foreign interference. However, there are some citizens who would like to see increased foreign ownership of stations.

There are numerous economic hurdles to starting broadcasting stations, including registration, re-registration, annual fees, music fees, an import tax on equipment, etc. Thus, 'It is not very attractive as a business.'

In the print media sector, there are also high costs on importing newsprint, and this makes it difficult to operate viable media houses.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**



**Average score:**

**2.0**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.3; 2012: 2.2; 2015: 1.5

**2.7 All media fairly represent the voices of all gender**

The media is predominantly male-populated, especially at senior management level. This limits the voice of women in the media.

Even the content of stories is predominantly about men – including on women’s issues or topics that are culturally/socially viewed as being in the domain of women. Reports on a discussion about a proposed ban (for environmental reasons) on disposable diapers, for example, were dominated by male voices, when a more balanced perspective should’ve been sought, as should be the case on every issue. There is also a challenge on women themselves. Women are reluctant to speak, unless they do so in the presence of their husbands.

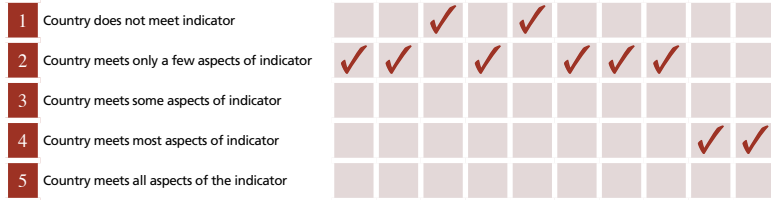
There are few cases of positive coverage of women, and stereotypes (regarding both men and women) continue to be reinforced.

With regard to training, although two thirds of media trainees are female, in practice, you will hardly find female journalists. Most female students move into ‘soft’ professions such as public relations or marketing.

On a positive note, one female editor established two new publications over a period of two years.

## Scores:

### Individual scores:



### Average score:

2.2

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.3; 2012: 2.2; 2015: 2.3

## 2.8 All media fairly represent the diversity of voices of society

The voices of people living with disabilities are not fairly represented. What is seen or read in the news media are predominantly ‘marketing stories’ – stories that promote the agenda of a particular organisation. In mainstream news, there is little content concerning those with disabilities; , and even politicians tasked with dealing with issues of disability, are reluctant to address those specific issues. There are also no entertainment programmes featuring those with disabilities.

Even training facilities face challenges, and most are not friendly to those with disabilities. The University of Zimbabwe was highlighted for having established a unit that creates braille notes and examination papers for those with visual challenges.

It is common to have other voices speak ‘on behalf of’ minorities, but the minorities themselves are not heard. Although newspapers have held meetings with the deaf community, for instance, the challenge is that society as a whole looks down on people with disabilities, and they are not given a platform to express their views. It is ‘a work in progress.’

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) issues are never positively covered (specifically by the ZBC). Due mainly to comments that have been made on LGBTIQ issues by the former president, this community continues “suffering in silence.”

Additionally, in terms of reporting on LGBTIQ communities, there is an issue of stereotyping, and often inappropriate or offensive language is used to describe these minority groups. Some newspapers will sensationalise these issues. One example is the recent coverage focusing on male prostitutes in Bulawayo, which failed to address the issue of lack of rights of male sex workers.

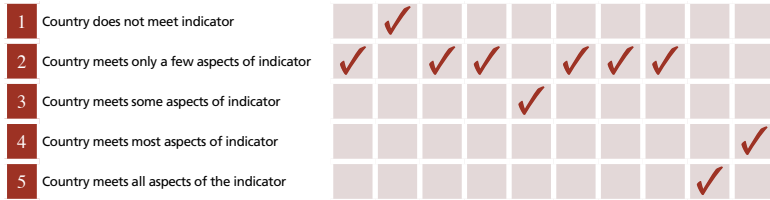
Regarding religion, it is mainly Christians that are represented in the media, and even then, the focus is more on sermons. There is also a trivialisation of non-believers, and the media pursue an agenda that ‘everyone must believe.’

Panelists felt that as a secular state, Zimbabwe should be more open to all religious beliefs, as well as to all who don't hold any beliefs.

Media houses face various challenges in covering minority issues, with a lack of resources being especially problematic. Obtaining comments from minority groups often proves difficult.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**



**Average score:**

**2.5**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.7; 2012: 2.7; 2015: 2.4

## 2.9 Media cover the full spectrum of economic, cultural, political, social, national and local perspectives including through investigative reports

Looking through an average newspaper, a reader would note the different sections, each covering the spectrum of topics – business, sport, cultural events, etc.

What lacks, however, is investigative reporting – reporting that depends on issues, not events. In training institutions, the focus is still on reporting – the traditional ‘WWWWW’ method of putting a story together. However, these institutions have not evolved to train in other fields such as investigative journalism.

ZimFerrets (an organisation conducting investigative stories and training) has been established. But this is on a voluntary and ad hoc basis.

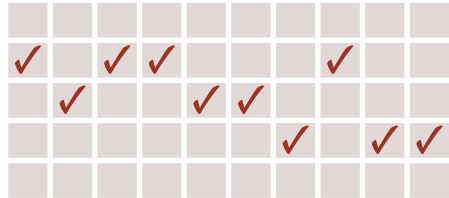
From the newsroom perspective, there is a need for more capacity in investigative journalism. Assistance would be needed to capacitate such a desk to allow time and resources for investigative stories.

There is also more of a focus on urban issues and national perspectives, but regional and local stations do a better job in representing their perspectives. This was another motivation for moving the process of establishing community radio stations forward.

### Scores:

**Individual scores:**

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.9**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1.8; 2008: 2.5; 2010: 2.6; 2012: 3.1; 2015: 2.7

## 2.10 Private broadcasters deliver a minimum of quality public interest programmes

In a 2018 report, it was established that ZiFM (a private broadcaster) was the best in terms of offering quality information to voters and acting in a non-partisan manner during the election campaign. Currently, the Electoral Act stipulates how much airtime must be given to election issues by private stations.

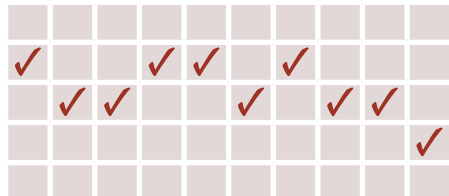
Although public interest programmes are heard on private broadcasters, most are paid for, pushing an agenda of NGOs who sponsor the content. There is not much in terms of pro-active programming from private stations.

The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) provides content guidelines for the public broadcaster, but not for private broadcasters. However, a new bill, a national film policy, future community radios and a television station owned by Zimpapers are all in the pipeline.

### Scores:

**Individual scores:**

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.7**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: n/a; 2012: n/a; 2015: 3.2

## 2.11 The country has a coherent and comprehensive ICT policy framework and/or the government promotes and implements measures, which meet the information needs of the public, including under-served communities

The country has no coherent ICT policy and there are many gaps in legislation, especially regarding issues of data handling. Even where policies do exist, implementation is lacking.

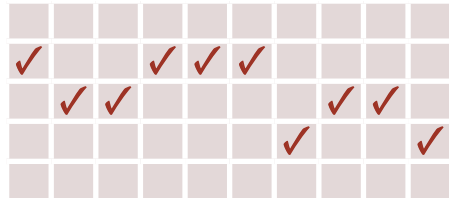
Government measures are focused on building base stations for underserved communities. This is a good initiative, but there is more that is needed for effective information distribution. Government websites, for example, often lack relevant content. One example given was the possibility of processing passport applications online, which has still not been implemented.

The universal access fund from telecoms operators is designed to help fund further development in this area.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



#### Average score:

**2.8**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.2; 2012: 2.9; 2015: 2.4

## 2.12 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with editorial content

Although there are private advertisers who exert pressure on the media, there is not as much pressure from the government.

Under the previous administration, government pressure was more apparent. An example was given of a minister who, in 2014, indicated to a newspaper critical of government, that ‘if parastatals were instructed not advertise, it might cause financial damage to the newspaper.’ This was interpreted as a veiled threat to that publication.

‘There has been a marked departure from the previous militant approach of the government.’ The government has now committed itself to an open media environment, which they have linked to economic growth. ‘The media industry is a yardstick of the economy – it can’t survive in a dying economy.’

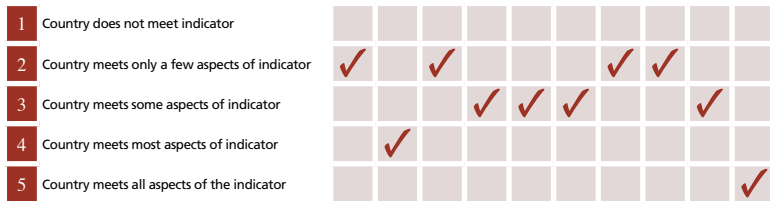
One popular government strategy is to place advertisements – such as the congratulatory birthday messages for the President and other dignitaries – in the various media . These adverts will often be placed in newspapers favoured by the state, rather than the more independent papers.

However, it was pointed out that these government advertising supplements are often projects initiated by newspapers themselves as a “money making scheme”, rather than by government.

Additionally, at times, opinion pieces by government public relations officers writing ‘in their personal capacity’ are published in newspapers.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**



**Average score:**

**2.9**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 2.3; 2010: 1; 2012: 4; 2015: 3.3

**2.13 The size of the advertising market can support a diversity of media outlets**

Currently the media industry is in a dire situation. ‘It’s a dog eat dog environment where we are competing for a very small cake.’ Therefore, journalists make several compromises in terms of the stories that they publish, for fear of treading on the toes of the big advertisers. One investigative story which was published about a leading bank, for example, resulted in the bank withdrawing all advertising in the publication for six months.

Even the ZBC has complained that although ministries advertise, they don’t pay.

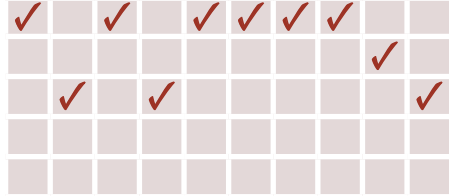
The small advertising industry is controlled by a few players, and there is also a political aspect in that ZANU-PF has been using advertising agencies to help organise political events. Media coverage of these events then takes precedence over stories.

Media houses are not transparent with regard to their circulation, although a company called ADMark releases some information on advertising spend.

## Scores:

### Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



### Average score:

**1.7**

Score of previous years:

2006: 2.3; 2008: 1.9; 2010: 1.1; 2012: 1.8; 2015: 1.8

### Overall Score for Sector 2:

**2.6**





## SECTOR 3:

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster

### 3.1 Broadcasting legislation is passed and is implemented, and provides for a conducive environment for public, commercial and community broadcasting

The Broadcasting Services Act of 2007 is in place, and is implemented by the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ).

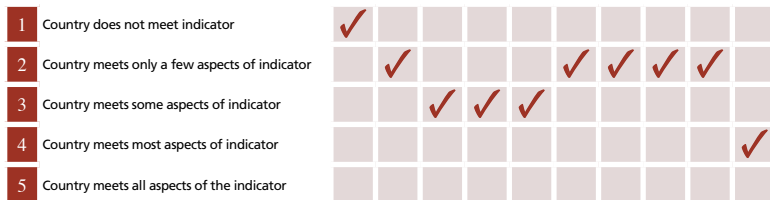
An amendment to the Act (Chapter 12: 06) – focussed on licensing fees – was passed in 2016. This was, however, selectively disowned by the BAZ. Engagements with the intention of reviewing the legislation are ongoing. However, it is still too early to gauge progress in this regard.

Although licencing for public and commercial radio broadcasting exists, there is still no definitive legislation regarding community broadcasting.

The BAZ has called for applications for television and radio licences, but they have not yet done so for commercial television. A frequency allotment plan has been published, introducing private television on top of the ongoing digitalisation process. It seems there is only 'partial interest to fully go digital in Zimbabwe.' Currently, the deadlines set by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) for digitalisation have been missed by the country.

#### Scores:

##### Individual scores:



##### Average score:

2.4

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 1.1; 2010: 1.3; 2012: 1.8; 2015: 2.3

### 3.2 Broadcasting is regulated by an independent body adequately protected against interference by law, and whose board is appointed in an open and transparent manner involving civil society and is not dominated by any particular political party

The current Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) Board, established in 2019, comprises mainly ruling party and former military members. The constitution stipulates the exclusion of any serving military personnel in public

bodies – a provision which was underlined by a further ruling on the issue in the constitutional court.

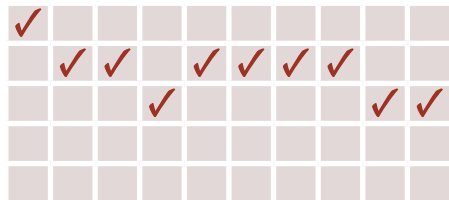
Before appointments can be made, there is a “vetting” process of potential applicants. In this process, those seen as “activists” are excluded. So, although the process appears to be transparent on the surface, there are always underlying stumbling blocks to fair appointments being made.

The argument from the side of government is that the airwaves are of strategic national importance, and this justifies the appointment of military personnel on the board. It is another example of laws not being aligned with the constitution.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.2**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1; 2012: 1.1; 2015: 1.5

### 3.3 The body regulating broadcasting services and licensing, does so in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.

The BAZ holds tight control over the process of allocating licences, even though it is felt that there is a need for more stations.

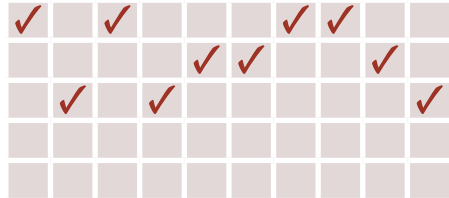
Yet, there is an element of public apathy. At the last public hearing of potential licence holders (dealing with commercial radio applicants), it was noted that the public did not ask any questions of these applicants.

The process of fairness and diversity in the issuing of licences rests with the BAZ, but the independence of this body is questionable.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**1.9**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 1; 2010: 1; 2012: 1.2; 2015: 2.2

### 3.4 The state/public broadcaster is accountable to the public through an independent board which is representative of society at large and selected in an independent, open and transparent manner

Although it is defined as a ‘public broadcaster’, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) is not a listed company, and therefore is not accountable to the public. Rather, the board is directly appointed by the Minister, with no public involvement.

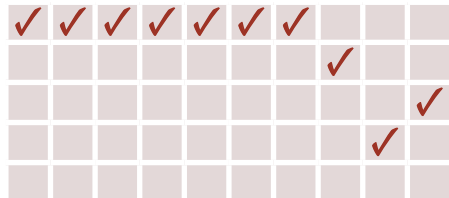
Despite the fact that the ZBC is being encouraged by civil society to become a true public broadcaster, there is no pressure on it from the BAZ for any change.

In terms of regulation, there is duality. By law, the ZBC (Commercialisation) Act regulates the operations of the ZBC as a commercial entity. However, as a public broadcaster, the Corporation is also regulated by the Broadcasting Services Act.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**1.6**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1; 2008: 1; 2010: 1.1; 2012: 1.3; 2015: 1.5

### 3.5 The editorial independence of the state/public broadcaster from political influence is guaranteed by law and practised to ensure balanced and fair news and current affairs programmes

Although the Constitution prescribes the editorial independence of the ZBC [61(4)], the reality is that there is little in the way of balanced and fair news coverage.

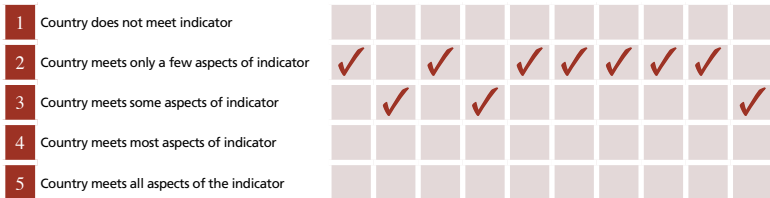
This bias is particularly true for stories dealing specifically with political or economic issues. Other stories (human interest and features) are generally well presented. However, even these social and human-interest stories can often be spun in a political way. This is revealed in the use of sources for stories, whereby independent analysis is lacking, but there is ‘always someone who is supporting the ruling party.’

This also relates to print journalism. Although political reporting is ‘filled with toxic journalism’, coverage of other stories is more professional.

The Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) conducts regular content monitoring and analysis.

#### Scores:

##### Individual scores:



##### Average score:

2.3

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: n/a; 2012: n/a; 2015: 1.8

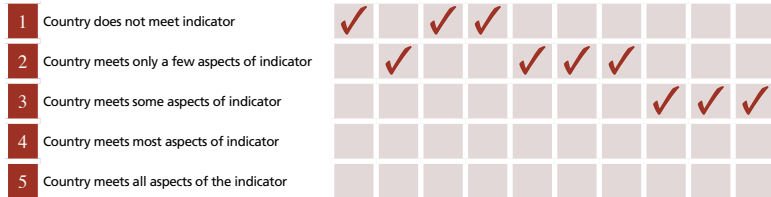
### 3.6 The state/public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from political interference through its budget and from commercial pressure

Although it is supposed to get funding from the line ministry, the ZBC claims to receive nothing from the national budget. Approximately 10% of their funding comes from licence fees and the rest from advertising. There are, however, current proposals for the ZBC to receive funding directly from Treasury.

The fact that the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services owns 98% of the ZBC and directors only own 2% leads to a high degree of political interference in news content.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**



**Average score:**

**2.0**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.1; 2012: 1.5; 2015: 2

### 3.7 The state/public broadcaster offers diverse programming and formats that cater for all interests, including local content and quality public interest programmes

The ZBC does try to feature diverse content with programmes for minority groups, including news in minority languages. There is also a national radio station for minority languages.

The issue of language is important. Hardly any valuable public information is published in local languages. Although the ZBC is trying to be more diverse in terms of languages, there is still a dearth of local languages in the print media. The local language newspapers that exist tend to focus on tabloid stories, but not on the major stories that matter.

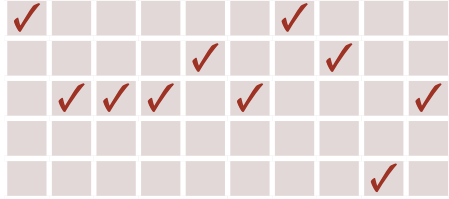
Also, the president delivers his State of the Nation Address and other speeches (including during rallies in the rural areas) in English, but most people do not speak English.

Furthermore, in certain regions, even Shona or Ndebele are not understood, so more needs to be done in promoting all local languages.

## Scores:

### Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



### Average score:

**2.6**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: n/a; 2012: n/a; 2015: 3.1

### Overall Score for Sector 3:

**2.1**



## SECTOR 4:

The media practise high levels of professional standards



## 4.1 The standard of reporting follows the basic principles of accuracy and fairness

Generally, the media tries to be fair. There are now fewer cases of people complaining about unethical reporting, and fewer cases of people taking the media to court in order to seek recourse. In terms of fairness, reporters are urged to write balanced stories and get comments from more than one source.

However, there continue to be mistakes and inaccuracies, and there are occasions when an apology has to be printed. Empirical evidence has pointed to a decline in journalism standards in Zimbabwe. An example is the Information and Media Panel of Inquiry (IMPI), a report which was compiled by media house editors in 2015, and which exposed some unethical practices.

Online stories are often inaccurate, and this is even transferred to the print media, some of whom – in a rush to meet deadlines – simply pull stories from the internet and print them, without checking the content and the sources first.

There are also trends whereby unnamed sources are quoted, a whole story is built around a single tweet, or unreliable sources (such as Wikipedia) are used.

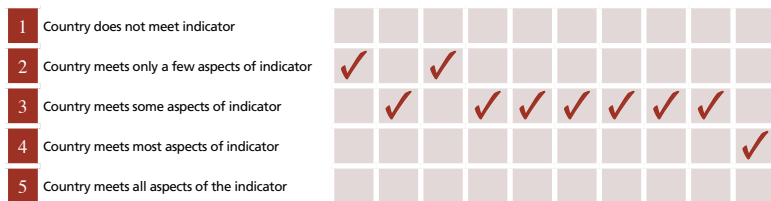
Online blogs now also have great impact, sometimes reaching a wider readership than traditional media platforms.

Fairness in the coverage of minority voices is needed. When dealing with those with disabilities, for example, journalists continue to ask basic (but intrusive) questions about a person's condition, whereas these are often complex medical issues that are difficult for a lay person to understand.

MISA Zimbabwe, amongst others, is doing good work in terms of training journalists to be professional and principled. ZimFact, a fact checking organisation, releases regular reports, but media houses seem to make limited use of them.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:



#### Average score:

Score of previous years:

**2.9**

2006: 2.3; 2008: 2.1; 2010: 2; 2012: 2.4; 2015: 2.5

## 4.2 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by independent/non-statutory bodies that deal with complaints from the public

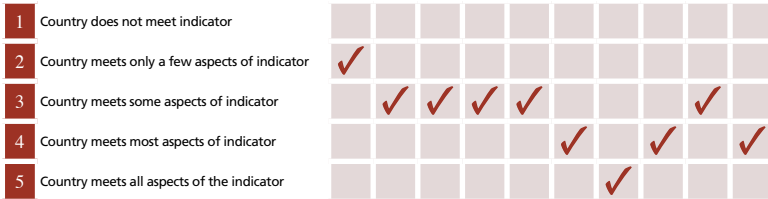
There is an independent body – the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ), which rules on issues of standards, and the media submit to them. There is a set mechanism for resolving complaints made to the Council.

Media houses generally abide by these rulings, but if a media house believes that the facts as published were correct, then ‘the media house will not budge.’ In these cases, the issue will then go to court.

There is also the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). Government, for instance, will complain to the ZMC, and not to the VMCZ. Currently, however, the contract of the Chief Executive Officer at the ZMC is expired and there is no board in place.

### Scores:

#### Individual scores:



#### Average score:

3.4

Score of previous years:

2006: 1.1; 2008: 1.7; 2010: 2.8; 2012: 3.2; 2015: 2.6

## 4.3 Salary levels and general working conditions, including safety, for journalists and other media practitioners, are adequate

Although journalism is seen as a glamorous profession, in terms of salaries it is poorly paid. ‘Their names are big, but their salaries are poor.’

This can also be linked to falling ethical standards. Journalists who pander to certain individuals may take ‘brown envelopes’ or ‘freebies’ because of their poor salaries, but the standard of their reporting deteriorates in the process. At ZBC, politicians will often pay journalists to attend a press conference or launch event.

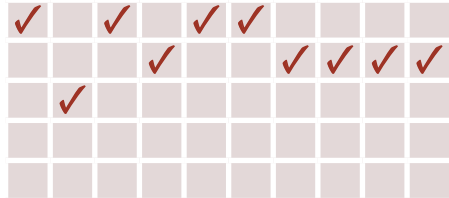
At the moment, salaries are determined on an ad hoc basis, although suggestions were made for a media council to standardise salaries.

Salaries for entry level public relations officers in government stand at approximately US\$60 per month. Journalists earn approximately US\$110 per month.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**1.7**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.5; 2012: 1.7; 2015: 2.9

## 4.4 Journalists and other media practitioners are organised in trade unions and/or professional associations, which effectively represent their interests

The Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) is visible and vocal. However, the union is faced with challenges such as non-payment of membership fees by both media houses and members, and there are concerns that the mandate of the union has deviated away from its core functions. Journalists, for example, expect more support in salary negotiations from the union.

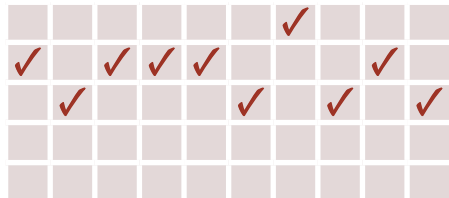
In addition, media houses are reluctant to support the ZUJ because of the impression that it has not been entirely effective in representing the interests of members.

The Zimbabwe National Editor’s Forum (ZINEF) exists as a professional body for editors, and MISA Zimbabwe is also active. Additionally, Gender & Media Connect is vocal in representing women in the media.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**2.3**

Score of previous years:

2006: 2.1; 2008: 2.1; 2010: 4.5; 2012: 2.5; 2015: 3.4

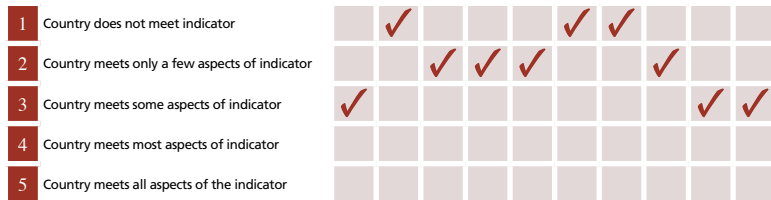
## 4.5 Journalists and media houses have integrity and are not corrupt

Because of the challenging economic situation, despite being people with influence who are shaping the future of the country, journalists may not even have money to get home each evening. This can leave them open to temptation. 'In difficult economic situations it is difficult for people to have integrity.'

Sources have taken advantage of this vulnerability, where newsrooms lack cardinal values and virtues. A football team will pay a journalist money just to cover the match – whether the team wins or loses; and there will be times when Non-Governmental Organisations, government or private companies will offer transport to journalists to cover stories.

Some media houses have internal codes of conduct and are strict on ethical issues. There have been cases of employees being dismissed when they were found to have been bribed to cover stories,. However, it was admitted that this is something which is often difficult to prove.

### Individual scores:



### Average score:

2.0

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 1.7; 2012: 2.3; 2015: 1.9

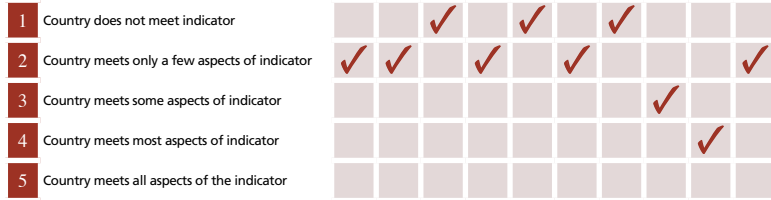
## 4.6 All journalists and editors do NOT practise self-censorship

Journalism is a passion-driven profession, not a highly paid one, but the current culture in the newsroom lacks the cardinal values and virtues required of the media. In difficult economic times, there can be pressure to self-censor certain stories. This is because the potential revenue through advertising can override ethical issues.

Commercial aspects therefore play a role. Banks, for instance, have to publish full page financial statements in newspapers. Because of this potential revenue, there will be an element of pressure on journalists and editors to self-censor themselves because of the commercial interests at play.

## Scores:

### Individual scores:



### Average score:

**2.0**

Score of previous years:

2006: 1.7; 2008: 1.4; 2010: 2; 2012: 1.6; 2015: 2.4

## 4.7 Media professionals have access to training facilities offering formal qualification programmes as well as opportunities to upgrade skills

Nearly every university in the country now has a media programme. However, the only two dedicated journalism training colleges are the Harare Polytechnic and the Christian College of Southern Africa (CCOSA). The rest of the academic institutions focus on training ‘media thinkers and media researchers.’

Opportunities for advanced journalism training are sorely lacking in Zimbabwe. After obtaining an undergraduate degree, there is no further training available for a journalist (such as a post-graduate diploma). Therefore, a journalism advancement institution that trains mid-career journalists and provides specialised training, is much needed in Zimbabwe.

Journalists have been sent to the Sol Plaatje Institute in South Africa for further training, although some have declined the offer for this additional training.

Another training-related challenge is that those who draw up curricula and benchmarks simply impose what they want. The Higher Education Examinations Council, for instance, has now decided that the two-year diploma is inadequate, and a national certificate is required (with O level as an entry requirement).

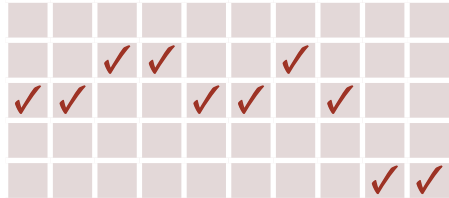
Furthermore, media curricula are not harmonised with industry needs. Thus, there is no relationship between the training activities at colleges and the requirements of the media industry.

Training institutions face pressures to increase the number of students in order to maximise revenue. However, with large numbers, there cannot be effective quality control. There are also some training institutions who use trainers who have never been in a newsroom. Training is also not accessible to those with disabilities. Sign language interpreters are not availed for hearing impaired students, for example, and lecturers are not trained in this regard.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**3.1**

Score of previous years:

2006: 4; 2008: 3; 2010: 3.1; 2012: 3.5; 2015: 3.4

## 4.8 Equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnicity, social group, gender/sex, religion, disabilities and age are promoted in media house

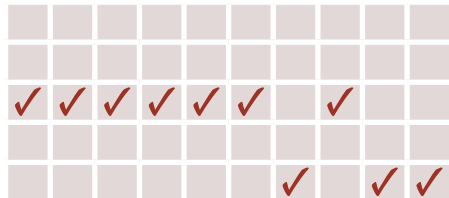
There are some examples of female empowerment. One leading weekly publication, *Zimbabwe Independent*, has a female editor, Faith Zaba. The *Sunday Mail* also has a female editor, Victoria Ruzvidzo, and there are several other females in high positions, including a news editor.

Some media houses also have policies on the employment and promotion of a gender balanced staff complement. The ZBC and ZiFM were noted as having made improvements in terms of employing people with disabilities.

**Scores:**

**Individual scores:**

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



**Average score:**

**3.3**

Score of previous years:

2006: n/a; 2008: n/a; 2010: 3; 2012: 2.8; 2015: 2.6

**Overall Score for Sector 4:**

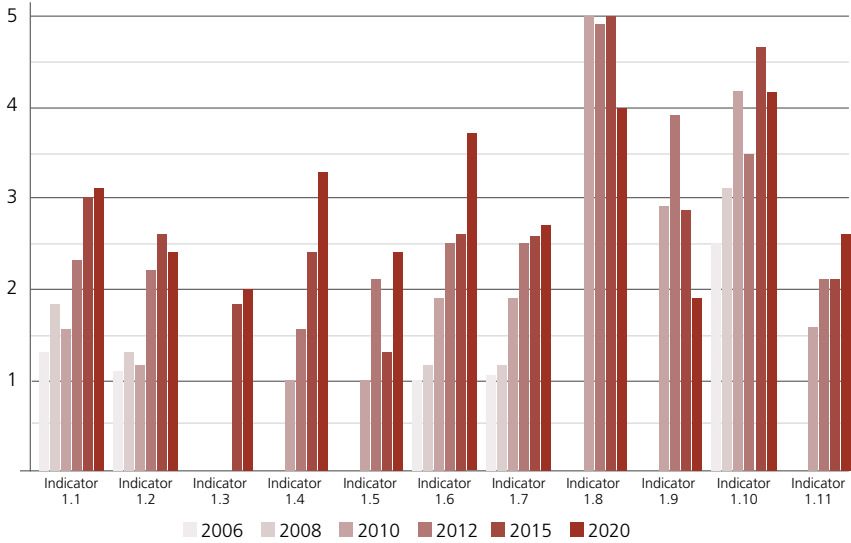
**2.6**



# COMPARATIVE GRAPHS

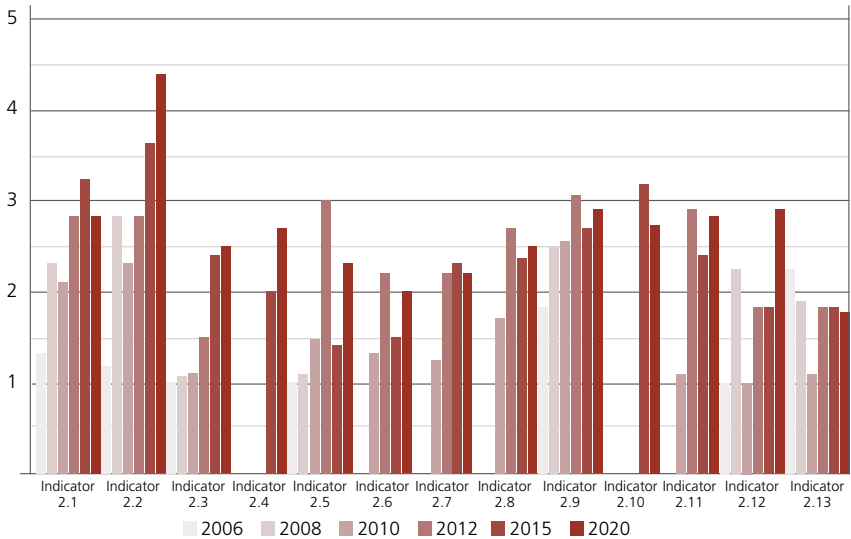
**SECTOR 1:**

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted



**SECTOR 2:**

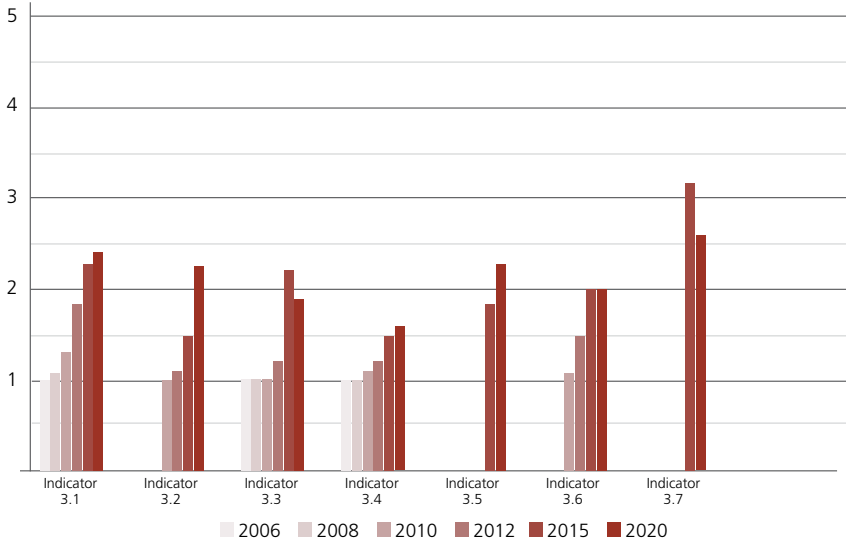
The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability





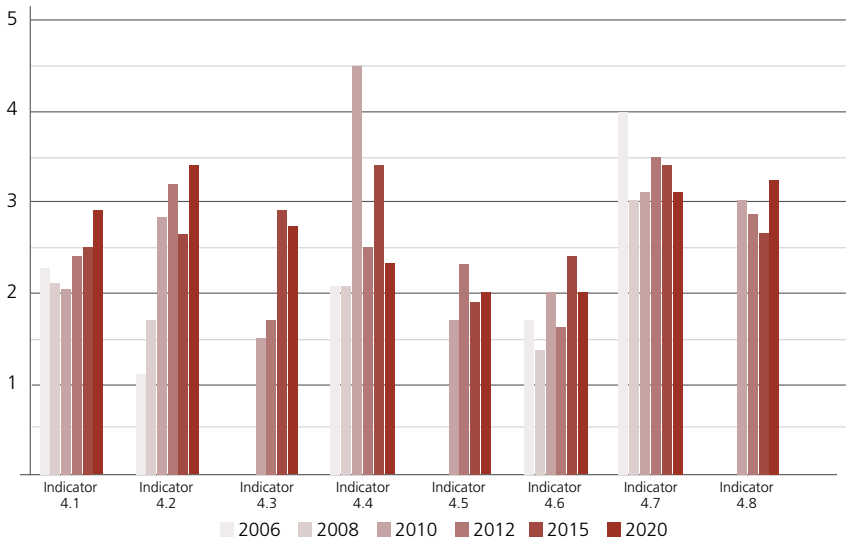
**SECTOR 3:**

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the State broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster

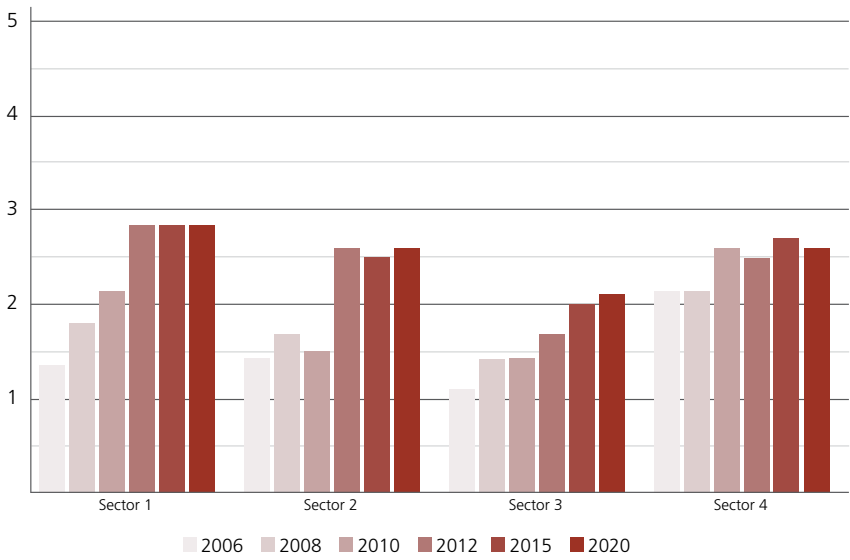


**SECTOR 4:**

The media practise high levels of professional standards



### ALL SECTORS: COMPARING AVERAGE SCORES





# THE WAY FORWARD

## 1. What were the developments in the media environment the last 3-4 years since the last AMB panel discussion?

### Contentious areas

- The delay in conclusion of the ongoing media law reform process
- Declining standards of journalism
- Lack of independence of the public broadcaster
- Poor salary levels and working conditions in the media
- Absence of private or community television stations

### General positive developments

- Improvement in government/media relations
- Information ministry more proactive in disclosing information
- Increased commitment on the part of government to move ahead with much-needed law reforms
- Digital media, especially social media platforms, have proven advantageous to under-represented communities to tell their own stories
- Despite more radio stations being established, it has not increased diversity

### Negative developments

- Increasing concerns about the sustainability of the media, particularly print media
- Internet shutdown and its far-reaching impact
- Declining levels of ethical practice on the part of journalists, compounded by the worsening economic conditions
- Proliferations of fake news, disinformation and misinformation

## 2. What kinds of activities are needed over the next 3-4 years?

### Journalists

- Reinvigorate the discussion on the establishment of an Employment Council for journalists

### Government

- Expedite the alignment of laws that affect the media and broader free expression rights with the revised 2013 Constitution
- Formally recognise the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe as a self-regulatory body, and its role in adjudication of complaints on the conduct/content of the media

### **Media houses (public/private)**

- Improve remuneration and working conditions for journalists
- Invest in training of journalists and other editorial staff
- Improve collaboration between media houses, journalists and training institutions

### **Development partners**

- Support law reform efforts of media and civil society organisations
- Improve collaboration between media development partners and the media
- Support capacity building of media trainers
- Consider standardisation of training curricula

### **Citizens**

- Take advantage of and/or investment in media and information opportunities

## **Panellists:**

### **Media (list in chronological order of surname):**

1. Kelvin Jakachira, News Editor
2. Innocent Madonko, Editor
3. Wisdom Mudzungairi, Editor
4. Chris Musodza, ICT consultant
5. Alexander Rusero, Lecturer
6. Maxwell Sibanda, Assistant Editor

### **Civil Society (list in chronological order of surname):**

7. Soneni Gwizi, Disability Ambassador
8. Vivienne Marara, Community Radio coordinator
9. Tafadzwa Mugabe, Lawyer
10. Patience Zirima, Media Monitoring Director

### **Rapporteur:**

Robin Tyson

### **Moderator:**

Zoé Titus