

## ANNEX 2: INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING METHODOLOGY (LEARNING BRIEF)



## Media Monitoring Quality of Investigative Reporting Rubric

For the Media Monitoring methodology, EnCompass’s subcontractor Playspread analyzed online articles for quantity and quality of investigative reporting by first classifying articles as either investigative or non-investigative. After all the articles were classified, investigative articles were assessed for quality using the rubric below on a scale of 1-5 for each of the five domains, where 1 indicated, “does not meet standard” and 5 represented, “exceeds standard”.

For the purposes of this brief, to assess whether training documents would foster the knowledge and skills for journalists to meet the standards, the content of the documents was assessed using the criteria under “meets standard” only.

**To what extent does the article meet the following standards for quality?**

Categories	Does not meet standard (Score: 1)	Meets some aspect of standard (Score: 2)	Moderately meets standard (Score: 3)	Meets standard (Score: 4)	Exceeds standard (Score: 5)
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<b>Public Interest</b>	Investigative report is reflective of the needs and interests of a specific population (i.e., group of people sharing common characteristics), which it connects to the broader public interest. <sup>1</sup> Or, the report relates a specific issue to the average citizen or broader issues of governance (management of public affairs).				
	1) Is not relevant to the public interest or does not consider impact on average citizen	1) Implications only considered for a single individual or affected community, often presented anecdotally, but article fails to draw connection to a broader population or discuss in relation to the public interest	1) Readers are able to infer an impact on a group beyond the article's immediate sources, but these connections are not clearly conveyed or are only partially successful in connecting the issue to broader public interest	1) Report makes clear connections between the needs and interests of a specific population and a broader community or the public interest <b>OR</b> 2) Relates the specific issue to the average citizen or broader issues of governance	<i>In addition to "meets standard (score: 4)":</i> 1) Report explores conflicts between needs and interests of a specific group and the broader public interest from multiple perspectives, which are well-sourced <b>AND</b> 2) Shows multiple different ways average citizen may be affected including positive and negative aspects, or examines the complexity in resolving the governance issue
<b>Report Originality</b>	The article presents new information evidence that is the result of original, rigorous, reporting (e.g., the media source states that they are breaking the story, or that they dug deeper into an ongoing story to find additional information previously not public that changes the story) <sup>2</sup>				
	1) Report does not present original information or publishes investigation that came entirely from other source.	1) Report presents another source's original investigative information and supplements this with public information but does not itself uncover new information previously unavailable to the public.	1) Report presents some new and original information (e.g., report does not break the story, but obtains perspectives from at least one previously non-public source, though this new information does not substantively alter the story).	1) Report presents new information (e.g., media source states that they are breaking the story, or they dug deeper to find previously non-public information that alters the story or paints it in a new light).	1) Investigation is clearly part of a larger series of reports published by the media source, indicating consistent monitoring or long-term investigation of the issue <b>OR</b> 2) Investigation is saturated with original information that had not previously been publicly available.
<b>Neutrality of Investigation</b>	The investigation leading to the report is conducted in a way that does not make assumptions at the outset; this means good faith of sources is not presumed (any source may provide false information), and no information is used without attempt at verification. These attempts at verification are presented, even if unsuccessful (e.g., a document could not be obtained despite journalistic attempt, or contradicting sources were not willing to				

<sup>1</sup> Reporting on Corruption A Resource Tool for Governments and Journalists Reporting on Corruption, UNCAC, 2013. p 14

<sup>2</sup> UNCAC. Reporting on Corruption A Resource Tool for Governments and Journalists Reporting on Corruption, UNCAC, 2013. p 14-15

	comment). This does not mean the published investigative report cannot present a hypothesis, but it does document how investigation provided opportunity to disprove hypothesis. <sup>3</sup>				
	1) Investigation is biased or set out to prove a pre-existing point without any attempt to engage information that could disprove point.	1) The investigation contains attempts to verify some, but not all, assertions. Bias is evident, whether intentional or unintentional. 2) It is not clear if individuals or organizations accused of wrongdoing were given an opportunity to respond.	1) The investigation attempts to verify sources' assertions, but attempts are either weak or do not completely verify information; stronger sources could have been approached for information. As a result, the audience may be left with some questions about the reliability of information.	1) The article presents how investigation sought neutrality, i.e., how it avoided assumptions, did not presume good faith of any source, and attempted to verify all information with at least one other source. 2) Individuals or organizations accused of wrongdoing are given opportunity to respond (even if they choose not to, in which case "no comment" is reported). If obvious viewpoints are missing (e.g., "the government declined to comment"), the journalist attempted to obtain information from other sources to address all key viewpoints. 3) If relevant, any potential conflict of interest by journalist and publication is disclosed (e.g., advertisers, relationships, etc.).	<i>In addition to meeting standard:</i> 1) The investigation confirms (or attempts to confirm) assertions made with multiple sources. 2) The report shows that the investigation process was conducted in a manner that was sensitive to biases and conducted in a collaborative environment that encouraged the exploration of differing viewpoints.
<b>Research Quality</b>	The report presents compelling evidence from multiple types of sources, including both human sources and documents (legal or government documents, business records, vital statistics, think tank or academic reports <sup>4</sup> ). These sources are clearly identified, verified, and have direct knowledge				

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. Story-Based Inquiry: A manual for investigative journalists. p. 9. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193078e.pdf#193103>

<sup>4</sup> Center for International Private Enterprise. Investigative Reporting: A toolkit for Reporters. 2009. p 38. [https://icirnigeria.org/resources/uploads/Investigative\\_Reporting\\_Toolkit-English.pdf](https://icirnigeria.org/resources/uploads/Investigative_Reporting_Toolkit-English.pdf)

	of topic. Sources of questionable reputability may be included but should not be basis for the article and thus do not fulfill this standard (consider treatment of these sources under neutrality standard, above).				
	1) Report contains single source (either human or document).	1) References more than one source, but sources are all of same type (e.g., multiple reports from same NGO, or anecdotal stories from 'man on the street' or 'vox pop' interviews). Little evidence that source claims are substantiated. <b>OR</b> 2) References more than one source and sources are of different types, but all sources are anonymous or rationale for anonymity is not explained. Little evidence that source claims were substantiated.	1) References more than one source from more than one source type (e.g., government press document and NGO report; multiple human sources from different organizations/government agencies). Report substantiates some claims by sources with other sources of information, either human or document. 2) There is evidence that efforts were made to corroborate information provided by human or document sources with other sources, but verification is not from sources that demonstrate 'authority' or 'expertise' (see score 4).	1) Report substantiates or disproves sources' claims with other sources of information, either human or document. 2) <b>Anecdotal</b> stories or claims are corroborated by at least one human or document source that demonstrate 'authority' or 'expertise' on the subject at hand (e.g., if a patient at a hospital claim that they were not given proper care, a nurse might substantiate that claim by asserting that he/she has seen many such cases. Or, a public official might say that people in XX neighborhood are suffering from malnutrition, and a journalist may seek evidence from residents of that neighborhood). 3) May contain anonymous sources, but rationale for anonymity is explained and source's authority is established; more than one source is not anonymous.	1) Report is saturated with evidence substantiating or disproving all sources' claims with other sources of information, either human or document. Anecdotal stories or claims are corroborated with several strong sources that demonstrate 'authority' or 'expertise' on the subject. 2) There is ample evidence that the journalists working on this report have gone to great lengths to obtain and verify sources.
<b>Source Variety</b>	Report's sources (either human or document) present a wide variety of viewpoints, i.e., article presents all sides of a story or sources represent the opinions of all stakeholders. <sup>5</sup>				

<sup>5</sup> Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. How to Become a Mouthpiece for the People: A Manual for Investigative Journalism. 2016. p 31

	1) Report's sources represent a single viewpoint (e.g., even if it contains multiple sources, all sources have the same view); article completely lacks dissenting views.	1) Sources offer slightly differing viewpoints (e.g., sources nuance each other), but do not substantively disagree; no dissenting source is cited.	1) Article presents more than one viewpoint, but there are key viewpoints or opinions that are clearly missing.	1) Report's sources present a wide variety of viewpoints, i.e., article presents all sides of a story or sources represent the opinions of all stakeholders.	1) Sources are provided the opportunity to respond to the viewpoints of other sources in the article (i.e., there is back and forth that allows sources to present new evidence or refute others' claims); neutral sources are engaged in addition to the various viewpoints.
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>					

