



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

# **National Media Development Policy**

# **2023**

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## FOREWORD BY MINISTER



As the Minister responsible for the Information and Communications Technology Sector, I would like to take this time to congratulate the Department of Information and Communications Technology for their tireless efforts in ensuring the completion of the first ever 'National Media Development Policy 2023' for Papua New Guinea.

I want to thank Marape-Rosso Government for providing me with the opportunity to address media development and usage issues through this policy.

I want to assure the people of PNG that serious consideration was given and due diligence was undertaken to ensure that stakeholders' views, concerns, criticisms, suggestions and propositions were noted and accommodated in the development of this policy. This includes a time-bound sample survey in and through various media and direct face-to-face survey in three provincial capitals in the four regions as well as Autonomous Region of Bougainville to gauge the view of the public.

The National Government recognizes the importance of the role of media and Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information. These freedoms, which are qualified rights for the greater, public good of the citizens, need to be seen in the light of the overarching National Goals of Integrated Human Development, Equality and Participation, National Sovereignty and Self Reliance and Papua New Guinea Ways. Both the goals and the freedoms are equally important and mutually reinforcing to guide the development of our people and our country.

The road to developing this policy has not been easy. There have been polar debates during Parliament sessions, criticisms made by the media fraternity, civic societies and international development partners within the country and abroad. Many of these were during the stakeholder consultation workshops at different stages of drafting of the policy and in the mainstream media as if both the National Goals and Basic Freedoms are at odds with each other when they are there for the benefit of us all. They are not at odds and that is the bottom-line. This Media policy is for citizens, residents, entrepreneurs, media practitioners and media consumers.

It is important that we have these debates. The outcome of these debates is a better developed and nuanced policy to identify, define, and establish new coordination and governance mechanisms, as well as to inform on reviewing of existing laws for amendment and or development of new legislation to capture the essence of responsibility and accountability from all stakeholders.

This policy and upcoming legislations, naturally subject to consultations, inform and embraces changing dynamics around the fast and ever evolving media landscape worldwide that has come ashore.

The media landscape has evolved from the traditional printing press, radio, television, internet to social media at unprecedented scale even while access is still a challenge to many. It is relevant and timely to establish pathways around ensuring credibility in the modern media, encouraging quality of information and news access and reporting, appreciating the role and challenges, and holding media in general responsible and accountable.

Media development information accessed, packaged and disseminated for public consumption must be professional, trustworthy, truthful, fair and where possible edifying – in the country we want to shape for us now and into the future.

With golden anniversary of independence in 16th September 2025, it is necessary to review, update and upgrade how we do business in the media space in PNG. This must be with the mindset of harnessing and enhancing the way we handle media information and news for development.

Media development policy has been absent, and most media-related legislations are also either absent or outdated.

We must learn lessons of the past, which we have done in this policy consultations and desk top studies and reviews. We must now plot a path forward beginning with this National Media Development Policy.

I am confident that this Policy will transform PNG media industry for the benefit of us all.

**HON. TIMOTHY MASIU, MP**

Minister for Information and Communications Technology

## REMARKS BY SECRETARY



The Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) is excited to present the National Media Development Policy 2023: A New Era of Media Excellence.

I want to acknowledge the Minister Hon. Timothy Masiu for his leadership and the Marape-Rosso Government for recognizing the Digital Sector as the critical development enabler for implementation of national programs.

This policy on media development is a natural extension of that recognition and it fills a void that dates back to the colonial era under Australian Government rule. The founding roots of at least two media organizations now – the National Broadcasting Corporation and the South Pacific Post Limited masthead, The Post-Courier were in existence before self-government and independence.

In fact, the specific legislation for print media is the Newspapers and Printers Act 1959 which was passed under the Australian colonial administration and adopted at Independence.

Further research has shown that Small Island Developing States (SIDS), specifically in the Pacific, have inherited democratic principles like “freedom of the press” but the size of the economies and the returns from investments in media business are insufficient to sustain professional development of journalists and establish self-regulation mechanisms that augments the freedom and protects the time-honored fourth estate role of media organizations.

Media has been, is and will always be a vital tool in development of PNG. Today the mainstream media is diversifying into multi-media with modern internet space especially under challenge by social media platforms with instantaneous e-discharge of information. People are sharing information on an unprecedented level with social media usage on different digital platforms exponentially on the rise in the nation.

This information dissemination has also accelerated issues of disinformation, misinformation and mal-information to take precedence in the media space with various motivations.

Partnerships and demarcation of responsibilities are crucial for all to contribute towards nation building through media development and/or information and news.

Media can inform, influence and shape how a society thinks and behaves. Media also plays an undefined but a significant role in ensuring transparency and accountability; for and on behalf of citizens on issues and matters that are of national importance.

The roadmap on development of this National Media Development Policy 2023 has included over four months of consultations and gauging of stakeholders' views, concerns, criticisms, suggestions, and propositions.

The stakeholder consultations have been backed with desktop research on media landscape including academic take media trends in PNG and the Pacific region. These have progressively informed various updated versions of the draft policy each time.

Specific issues and trends informing the near final draft, were then subjected to random sample surveys through online survey for residents in Port Moresby, Lae and Kokopo, and other centers of PNG. There were in-person surveys conducted also in the regional centres of Alotau, Madang, Hagen, and Buka in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

The sample survey, led and directed by a mostly independent Cre8tive Media PNG Limited, gathered and analyzed perceptions of the public on these issues and trends including: population access to information and news, media diversity in ownership, perceptions on quality of information and news including local content, perception of development news and journalism standards, and thoughts on accreditation.

The 100-page "Have Your Say in the National Media Development Policy Survey" report revealed that the random, voluntary views of those surveyed, augments the overall policy direction of the National Media Development Policy need on media quality, more local content and diversity in ownership, and affirmed accreditation.

Other observations in analysis, was the apparent lack of media literacy especially the reluctance of women to speak out. Culturally in many areas, women prefer a man to represent their views; and the blatant limited access to news and information in rural, remote areas of PNG highlights importance of ICT infrastructure and utilities roll-out.

Research and every encounter in direct consultation or even in media publicity has revealed and affirmed the necessity, strategic importance, timeliness and pioneering initiative required for the policy formulation and development.

The most revealing is that media in SIDS such as Papua New Guinea, while subscribing to the democratic principle of "freedom of the media" were unable or struggling to resource the professional media development and self-regulation mechanisms and even adequate salaries and benefits level of their journalists.

In fact, Pacific Islands News Association, whose membership comprises every significant media organization in most if not all Small Islands States, have expressed the need for engagement for assistance by the mostly democratic regional governments in professional media development as part of protection of the independence of the "fourth estate" from government regulation.

Several initiatives on this policy formulation and drafting consultations, preceded those issues. But it affirmed that directions by the National Government aligned with those regional concerns and initiatives and further affirmed the dire need to assist the media as a democratic institution within the Democratic Sovereign State space.

Given the domestic stakeholder consultations, the research-backed media landscape in the Pacific region including PINA concerns, the history of media landscape in Papua New Guinea with its outdated laws and the unprecedented, even revolutionary, entry and usage of Internet and social media including escalation of multimedia usages by mainstream media, and on the other hand, the lack of access to media information and news due to lack of sustainable communication infrastructure and utilities roll-out, this broad National Media Development Policy is overdue.

This policy will ensure that the media is harnessed, enhanced and developed within the time-honored democratic “freedom of the press” principle as well as best of breed principles of fair and balanced reporting, accountability and truth to enable constructive and positive news coverage and information dissemination that reinforces positive, productive and responsible thinking in PNG.

It aims to re-assure welfare and the safety, including freedom of press is guaranteed and is maintained for media personnel, who are always exposed to many risks in their line of work. Such protection will encourage media organization and journalists to undertake their duties without fear or favour.

This Policy will guide the needed governance mechanisms and legislation to promote media quality. media credibility and trustworthiness through accurate and quality news reporting and information dissemination, media diversity and variety, and media access.

**STEVEN MATAINAHO**

Secretary

Department of Information and Communications Technology



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A NATIONAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT POLICY: A NEW ERA OF MEDIA EXCELLENCE

This policy is needed for many reasons, not simply because of government concern and directives on quality of media content, but for multiple other reasons as well;

- Lack of an overarching suitable policy since adoption of the Papua New Guinea National Constitution and Independence on 16th September 1975;
- Need to harness media nation-building for the next 50th years and beyond in line with National Goals and Directive Principles of Integral Human Development, Equality and Participation, National Sovereignty and Self-Reliance, Natural Environment and Conservation and Papua New Guinean Ways;
- Outdated legislations compounded by revolutionary advent of internet and social media platforms into the traditional print, radio and television demarcation
- The need for multimedia organizations including resource limitation to effect self-regulation measures

At heart, the National Media Development Policy: A New Era of Media Excellence is about international best practice and national best fit to suit the developmental needs of Papua New Guinea.

The National Media Development Policy is formulated to harness and enhance media for development in PNG. The overall objective or purpose is to:

- review, inform and implement Section 46 of the Constitution, and existing legislations related to media including evolving changes;
- harness and develop the potential of the vast Government Media to disseminate positive development news and information in all existing and new media opportunities;
- promote and enhance quality and responsibility in both news and information collected, published and broadcasted in all media: television, radio, print and the internet including social media platforms; and
- provide an enabling environment for diversified multi-media ownership and to develop and operate responsibly in the media space.

The policy overview and contents, guided by the Constitution's National Goals and Directive Principles; and Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information; are aimed at a media space that provides quality information and news professionally, responsibly and accountably for all for development.

The Key Focus Areas of the Policy includes the harnessing and development of the vast potential for Government Media to provide access to the masses using existing National Broadcasting Corporation, and the Telikom PNG owned EMTV and Kalang FM Radio and other media avenues.

For the Government, the Policy provides for:

- establishment of National Media Commission (NMC) to promote; collaboration, self-regulation, and responsible media practices. The NMC aims to foster a vibrant and diverse media landscape that upholds transparency, accountability, and professionalism.
- establishment of a National Media Advisory Committee (NMAC) to coordinate government media and drive mobilization and needed infrastructure and utilities;
- establishment of National Media Content Committee (NMCC) to oversee national content and quota dissemination to wider PNG audience and readership;
- establishment of National Information Centre (NIC) to facilitate the dissemination of accurate government information, enhance transparency and accountability, foster public participation by providing enabling environment for wider participation in the media space, combat misinformation, and promote fact-based decision making.
- partnership and assistance of mainstream media for professional development, personal security and access to Government information in line with Freedom of Information.

The Government, in its reviews and consultations, has found that the current self-regulation of the Media industry has been ineffective due to the size of the media industry - and revenue returns to mainstream media, exponential growth in social media platforms and usage as well as a lack of will.

The policy aims to have a proactive approach on media professional development for quality, content and responsibility through schools of journalism, bridging journalism practice training and awareness; and legislation for establishment of more effective self-regulatory mechanisms at practitioner's level including mechanisms for establishment of media professionals' body with their own code of ethics, a complaint receiving body on media issues, and a media arbitration tribunal.

Another policy key focus area (KFA) is on overseeing content creation, quota for usage within Government Media and more generally on mainstream domestic, nation-building obligations within the quota.

Social Media is another policy KFA. The policy notes that. The contents of published information in social media platforms need to be aware of both of the censorship laws and the current abusive, inciteful and harmful content to individuals and society in general. The policy allows for an enhanced monitoring and recommendations for legal enforcement.

The Media industry provides business opportunities for citizens and joint ventures, on many media fronts in television and video productions, radio and documentaries, print including advertorials, newsletters and magazines, brochures, flyers and cards. The policy KFA aims to promote business opportunities in these areas by PNG citizens and residents.

## **SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND**

## 1.1 Intent of the Policy

PNG has operated without a coherent media policy and its media laws are very outdated – not to mention their colonial origins and imposition at a time when illiteracy was high; and media access and usage was limited. With the 50th Golden Anniversary of Sovereign Statehood due on 16th September 2025, the National Government has directed a review of the media landscape for a media policy. This National Media Development Policy is a result of the consultations, research and desktop research and review.

Crucial in this review has been the need to address and ground media's role in development and nation-building in our democratic Sovereign State and particularly the Constitution and other relevant laws related to media. These legislations are for the advancement and betterment of citizens and residents within the borders and jurisdiction of PNG. Overarching them are the five National Goals of Integral Human Development, Equality and Participation, National Sovereignty and Self Reliance, Natural Resources and Environment and PNG Ways.

The media landscape has evolved rapidly from traditional to modern media with the advancement and the use of digital technologies made possible by the internet.

With the growth of the Internet and social media, traditional media outlets such as print, newspapers, radio, and television stations have seen a decline in readership and viewership demanding media professionals to adapt to collecting news and information using different dissemination platforms and communication channels.

Digital media such as online news sources, podcasts, and social media platforms have become more popular and favored mediums of communication and information dissemination largely due to ease made possible by mobile telecommunications. The adoption of smartphones, and tablets, and the consumption of media on a personal level has increased more than ever before.

Policy and legislation within media have been stretched extensively. The Newspapers and Printers Act 1954 has been in place since pre-self-government and independence. The broadcast media, led by the largest media organization, National Broadcasting Corporation, is undergoing Analogue to Digital Migration. The broadcast media, which includes mobile telecommunications, are licensed to operate using specific spectrums. Harnessing social media requires some serious thinking. As a democratic country, freedom of the media drawn from the Constitution on Freedom of Expression and Freedom to Disseminate information, are not absolutes but qualified rights.

PNG's history on media self-regulations that twin's freedom of the media has not worked effectively. No one can remember if there has been any media tribunal held to hold to account any misdeeds by media organizations and/or media professionals. Attempts at establishing either a journalists' association or a professional body similar to the professional lawyers, engineers, accountants and engineers to hold their own accountable based on their own code of ethics have been futile at best or non-existence.

A lot of this can be traced to size of the media industry and therefore resources. The Pacific Islands News Association has appreciated this and advocated for versatile partnerships to promote freedom of expression and freedom of information including with regional governments.

This policy will provide a direction for all stakeholders to appreciate and reflect on changes in the advancement of technologies, increasing paradigm shift in the convergence of technology, increase in the utilization of digital media and channels of communications, and the progressively changing role and skills required for media professionals, and the media organizations – existing and intending to participate – within this media space within PNG's Sovereign State jurisdiction.

The roles and responsibility of media practitioners as well as that of a responsible, democratic Government in ensuring freedom of the press, responsibility in information access and dissemination, professional development for quality and accountability, ultimately with the view to harness media for collective development with transparency and accountability is crucial part of this policy.

## **1.2 PNG Media Landscape**

### **1.2.1 History of the Media Sector in PNG**

Over the past century, PNG's media landscape has undergone significant transformations, starting from the introduction of print media and analog broadcasting in 1885 to the digitalized multimedia era using the internet and various platforms such as social media. The evolution of media in PNG has been largely market-driven, lacking strategic government policies and support, considering the country's high illiteracy rates, linguistic diversity, and infrastructure limitations common to developing economies.

Print media in PNG began with the establishment of the German-language newspaper *Deutsche Neu Guinea Zeitung* in 1885, followed by the introduction of the English-language *Post-Courier* in 1969. While early media initiatives were primarily established by colonial powers, the country's move towards local content and language consciousness emerged with the ABC directorate in 1958. Efforts were made to balance pre-produced Australian content with programs in local languages, laying the foundation for future media developments.

The media landscape faced challenges during adverse economic times, with newspapers like *The Times of PNG* transitioning into *Saturday Independent* and later *The Independent*, which eventually closed in 2003 due to economic difficulties. The *Post-Courier*, backed by Rupert Murdoch's News Limited, faced competition from *Niugini Nius* and later *The National*, which aimed to challenge its status as the leading daily newspaper in PNG.

In terms of broadcasting, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the country's first locally-owned radio station, *Wantok Radio Light*, played significant roles. With over 60 radio stations in the country, including Catholic-church's *Radio Maria* and Seventh Day Adventists' *Hope FM*, efforts were made to provide content in local languages alongside English and Tok Pisin.

Television broadcasting began with satellite broadcasts from Australia, followed by the establishment of Niugini Television Network (NTN) and EMTV. NBCTV, a state-owned enterprise combining Kundu 2 and National Television Station, launched in 2008, offering extensive coverage across PNG. Digital TV channels like TVWan and Click TV have also emerged, providing additional options for viewers.

The advent of the Internet and social media has brought about significant changes, with internet penetration reaching 23.1% in 2023. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram have gained popularity among the younger population. However, traditional media such as print, radio, and television continue to play a vital role in PNG's media landscape.

The convergence of media and information technology has transformed the industry, enabling multimedia approaches such as livestreaming, podcasts, and written uploads. This convergence has blurred the boundaries between print and broadcast media, emphasizing the need for updated policies, legislation, and development support frameworks to accommodate the current media landscape.

To navigate the challenges posed by the evolving media landscape, PNG must adapt its policies and regulations, ensuring ethical standards, protecting the public's right to information, and maintaining a well-regulated and ethically sound media environment. This requires a collaborative effort between media organizations, content creators, consumers, policymakers, and regulators.

### 1.2.3 Trends in PNG Media Landscape

The media landscape in PNG has been evolving with the emergence of new technologies and changing consumer preferences. Traditional media, including newspapers, radio, and television, still hold influence, but digital media is rapidly growing with online news websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications. The increasing use of mobile phones has accelerated the shift to digital media, with social media becoming essential for citizen journalism, bloggers, influencers, and content creators.

While traditional media focuses on local news, digital media provides access to global news and information. The trend towards digital media is expected to continue, but traditional media remains vital, especially in areas with limited digital access. Media companies in PNG face challenges such as limited resources and competition from international outlets. State-owned and private TV and radio stations, along with major print media outlets, dominate the media landscape.

Print media has experienced a decline in circulation as readers want immediate news and so have turned to online sources. This shift has resulted in decreased advertising revenue for print media companies, with businesses reallocating their advertising budgets to digital platforms. Conversely, social media growth has created new revenue opportunities for PNG media companies. Many organizations have established a presence on platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, enabling them to reach new audiences and generate advertising revenue.

PNG has a population of 10.24 million<sup>1</sup>, with 13.7% residing in urban areas and 86.3% in rural areas. There are 3.74 million active cellular mobile connections, representing 36.5% of the population. Internet users' number 3.29 million, with a penetration rate of 32.1%. However, 67.9% of the population, equivalent to 6.95 million people, still remain offline.

With the increasing internet penetration, social media platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, have become significant sources of news and information in PNG with 872.9 thousand social media users<sup>2</sup>, accounting for 8.5% of the population. Facebook is the most popular platform with 1.2462 million active users, followed by Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Between January 2022 and January 2023, social media users in PNG grew by 8.5%. These figures highlight the significant potential of digital media in PNG, particularly in remote areas where traditional media may not be easily accessible.

These statistics suggest that social media is becoming an increasingly popular means of communication and information-sharing in PNG, especially in areas where traditional media may not be accessible. It has also been used for political campaigning and activism, with politicians and advocacy groups using social media to reach a wider audience and mobilize support.

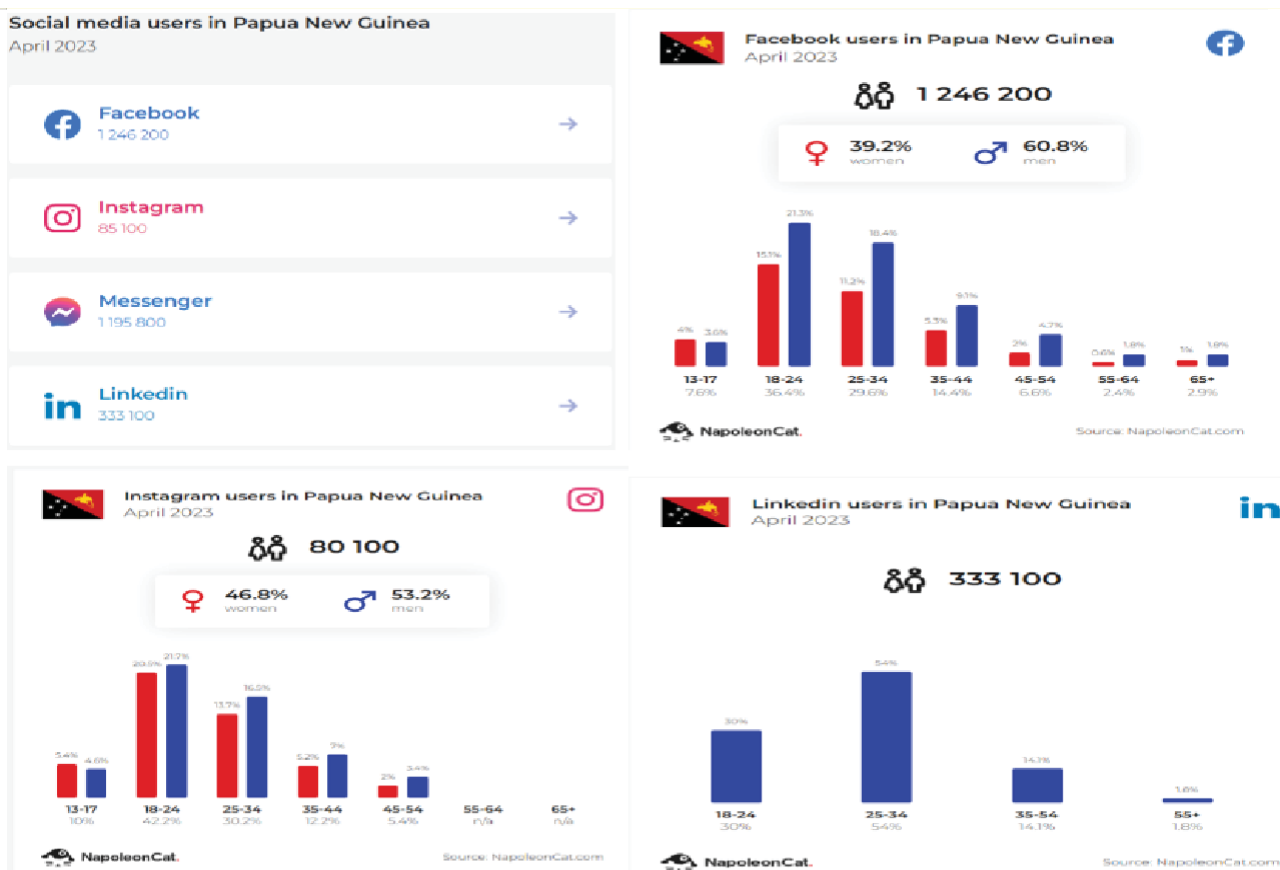


Figure 1. Social Media users in PNG - April 2023

<sup>1</sup> Digital 2023: Papua New Guinea — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights

<sup>2</sup> Social Media users in Papua New Guinea - April 2023 | NapoleonCat

## 1.2.4 Trends in Regional Media Landscape

Long time academic on the Championing media scrutiny in the Pacific<sup>3</sup>, Dr David Robie (2004), notes trends in the historical development and state of the media as “remarkably diverse” in his treatise of the economic content of media production, nature of audience which consumes media products, and whether the audience is adequately served by media outlets.

Dr. David Robie's analysis highlights the diverse nature of the media landscape in the Pacific, including PNG. Media organizations, both large and small, operate as businesses, aiming to protect their interests and maintain profitability. However, smaller indigenous-owned media outlets face resource inequalities compared to foreign-owned entities, impacting their ability to self-regulate and safeguard freedom of expression and information.

The Pacific Islands News Association (PINA)<sup>4</sup>, of which the Media Council of PNG (MCPNG) is a member, recognizes the importance of government partnerships in protecting media freedom. PINA emphasizes the immediate need for legislation to protect freedom of expression, freedom of information, and "whistleblower" protection. They advocate for discussions on establishing a media complaints ombudsman or tribunal to address issues related to media freedom. Additionally, PINA aims to collaborate with journalism schools and institutions to incorporate freedom of expression and information in media and journalism curricula.

It is evident that there is a need for proactive measures to protect media freedom. Partnerships between media organizations, national associations, regional governments, and sub-regional bodies can play a crucial role in enacting legislation, establishing independent tribunals, and promoting freedom of expression and information within the media curriculum.

These efforts align with the goals of PNG's national directive principles in fostering a conducive environment for a vibrant, responsible, and independent media sector.

## 1.2.5 Trending Media Issues: Media Reports

The media in Papua New Guinea faces challenges, including limited resources, bias in reporting, and political interference. During the COVID-19 outbreak, misreporting and misinformation have impacted public trust and safety. Journalists have been threatened, and ethical issues persist. The PNG Media Council promotes ethical journalism. Regional journalists call for safety and solidarity. The National Media Survey revealed insights, leading to the Policy for responsible and diverse media. Media freedom concerns arise in Fiji. *Refer to all these reports in the annex.*

Addressing these challenges is crucial for media credibility, public discourse, and upholding democratic values in PNG.

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<sup>3</sup> [Associate Professor David Robie | Pacific Media Centre \(aut.ac.nz\)](#)



### 1.3 Policy Development Process

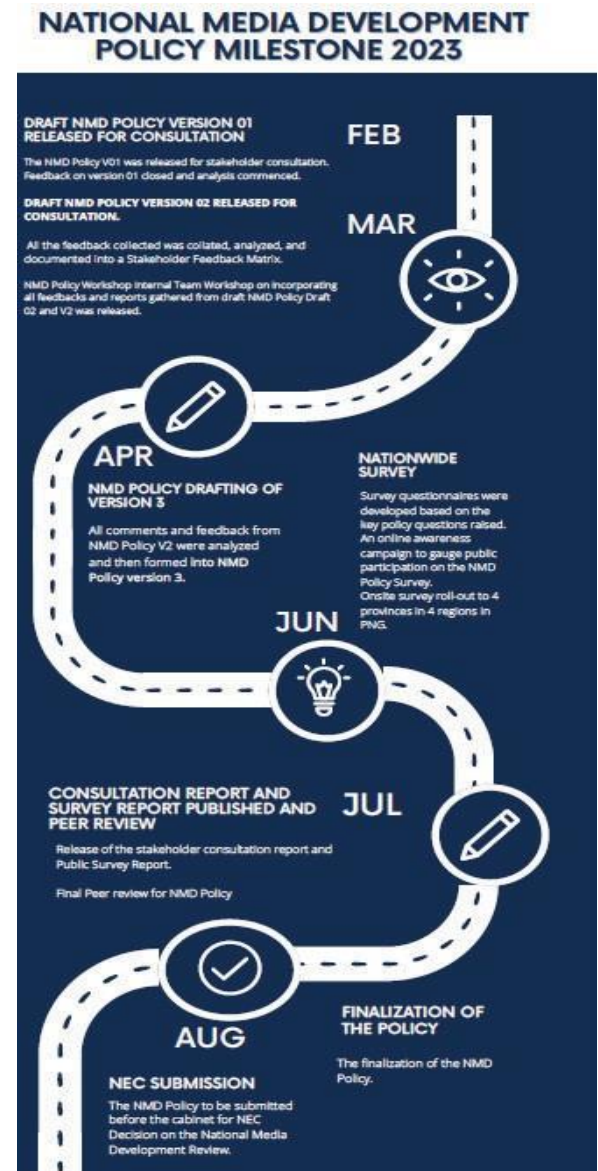
The national media development policy for PNG has undergone a rigorous development process involving both internal and external consultations. A recently concluded survey highlighted the necessity of this policy, as there were no existing guiding documents in the media space to steer the development of the media sector in PNG.

The policy was initially developed in 2022 and underwent multiple reviews within the Department of ICT. It was subsequently released for external consultation in February 2023 with extended consultation period <sup>20</sup> to give stakeholders ample time to respond to the policy.

During this phase, a major external consultation was conducted, which received a significant response with multiple comments and suggestions regarding the policy from the local, regional and international community both online and through written comments. Many of the online comments were from journalists who are of the view that the government is trying to control the media as stated by Scot Wide<sup>21</sup>, a renowned journalist in PNG. However, the government has made it clear in its response<sup>22</sup> to these statements and comments that the government in no way or form will control media but rather provide an enabling environment where media can grow.

DICT took into account the overwhelming feedback received from local, regional and international stakeholders both online and offline, the policy underwent second round of external consultation to further refine its content. This time a national media survey was conducted by DICT team throughout four regions of the country including the special region of Bougainville, to gather critical insights into the media landscape, consumption patterns, and public perceptions.

The national media survey conducted by the DICT team received overwhelming feedback from various stakeholders, leading to further refining of the media policy. The survey gathered insights from over 1,500 responses across four regions, including Bougainville. It covered topics like news accessibility, media accreditation, local content, training, and more, shaping the policy's content and direction.



<sup>20</sup> [Masiu extends media policy consultation period extended - Post Courier](#)

<sup>21</sup> [New PNG media policy will lead to government control of media - Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre](#)

<sup>22</sup> [PNG Communication Minister Masiu denies 'control of media' | PINA](#)

A key finding was the strong support for media professionals and companies to obtain accreditation, influencing provisions for responsible reporting. Traditional media sources like TV, radio, and newspapers were preferred over social media for their perceived trustworthiness, leading the policy to support credible media outlets.

The survey revealed a lack of local content in mainstream media, resulting in the creation of the Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC) to encourage funding and distribution of local digital content, showcasing PNG's diversity. It also stressed the importance of media literacy programs and promoting female inclusion in the media industry, resulting in provisions for empowering women in media production and dissemination.

Training and capacity building for media professionals were highlighted as crucial, with the National Media Commission (NMC) playing a vital role in supporting media development initiatives. The overall focus of the policy is to create a diverse and responsible media landscape, promoting transparency and accountability, and contributing to PNG's journey towards a stronger and more inclusive democracy. The policy's significance lies in its alignment with PNG's 50th anniversary in 2025, aiming to guide the media industry's growth and prosperity while reflecting the country's core values

## **SECTION TWO: POLICY OVERVIEW, OBJECTIVES & KEY PRINCIPLES**

## 2.1 What is Media

Media is a fundamental channel of communication that enables the transmission of messages from one person or group to another. In PNG, the media landscape comprises of two primary forms: traditional media, encompassing print and broadcast outlets, and modern media, including digital and social media platforms. Traditional media outlets like newspapers and radio stations play a crucial role in delivering news and information, while digital media platforms have revolutionized connectivity among people in unprecedented ways.

Mainstream media outlets, often owned by large corporations, serve as credible sources of news, but they encounter challenges in maintaining independence and upholding journalistic integrity. Public media organizations, funded or owned by the government, provide important insights into government policies but may face pressures to report in a favorable manner. Private media entities, privately owned and funded, offer diverse perspectives but must navigate the delicate balance between commercial interests and editorial independence.

Social media platforms have gained significant prominence in PNG, providing individuals with avenues to share information and express opinions. However, the absence of robust regulations poses risks to public safety and national unity. The government recognizes the need to establish policies and regulations to ensure responsible use of social media, promote ethical reporting, combat misinformation and hate speech, and enhance media literacy among citizens.

Media in PNG plays a vital role in informing the public, but it faces challenges in maintaining independence, credibility, and responsible practices in the digital age. Efforts are being made to address these challenges through policy interventions and the establishment of regulatory frameworks that foster a vibrant and responsible media landscape.

## 2.2 Policy Overview

The PNG National Media Development Policy seeks to create a vibrant and diverse media landscape in PNG that serves the public interest and contributes to national development.

The Policy aims to promote, uphold and support principles of freedom of expression and information in PNG through the development of public and private media including media training and capacity building and supporting mechanisms of self-regulation.

The Policy recognizes the importance of content including global cross-cutting issues of climate change, minority and disadvantaged people's rights as well as PNG's multi-lingual diversity and cultures and the Christian principles that are ours; and importance of quality, edifying packages of news and information to citizens, residents onshore as well as foreigners overseas.

The Policy advocates two-fold approach: legislate and provide support to self-regulate to ensure responsible, accountable and ethical journalism; and to mobilize government media including infrastructure and telecommunication utilities to effectively disseminate state and government information and news.

The policy further seeks to establish a National Media Commission to oversee, drive and implement the two-fold approaches by mobilizing stakeholders in Government media and supporting and resourcing the mainstream news media in close association with, but independent from, state agencies.

## **2.3 Objective**

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- i) inform the legislation specific to media sector and update existing legislations par with evolving changes in the media sector;
- ii) promote and enhance quality and responsibility in both news and information collected, published and broadcasted in multi-media: television, radio, print and the internet including social media platforms;
- iii) harness and develop the potential of the vast Government Media to disseminate positive development news and information;
- iv) establish a content quota and resourcing system to provide an enabling environment for diversified multi-media to develop and use local content.

## **2.4 Principles**

The following principles shall guide the implementation of this Policy:

- i) Freedom of expression and access to information shall be promoted and protected in all media and communication channels.
- ii) Media professionals shall operate freely and independently without fear of intimidation, censorship, or harassment.
- iii) Ethical and professional standards shall be upheld in all media operations and dissemination.
- iv) Digital media platforms and technologies shall be used responsibly and ethically, and their development and use shall be encouraged.
- v) Regulatory frameworks and mechanisms shall be established to promote accountability and transparency in the media sector.

## **SECTION THREE: POLICY ALIGNMENT**

### 3.1 Core Government Policies, Legislations & Existing Mechanisms

The *Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea* provides the overarching legal framework that subsequent legislations are developed accordingly for respective sectors. Within the ICT sector, certain laws have been recently developed and updated to address new developments, emerging trends, practices and challenges. Apart from the *National Information and Communication Technology Act 2009*, the *Digital Government Act 2022* is the most recent legislation pertaining to the emerging trends in digital transformation. The media sector, which has played a significant role in uniting the diverse tribes in Papua New Guinea to a nationhood, lacks clear policy direction with linkages to the national development agenda. Hence, the National Media Development Policy seeks to link media's role to national development agenda and equally important, inform and update existing legislations par with evolving changes in the media sector.

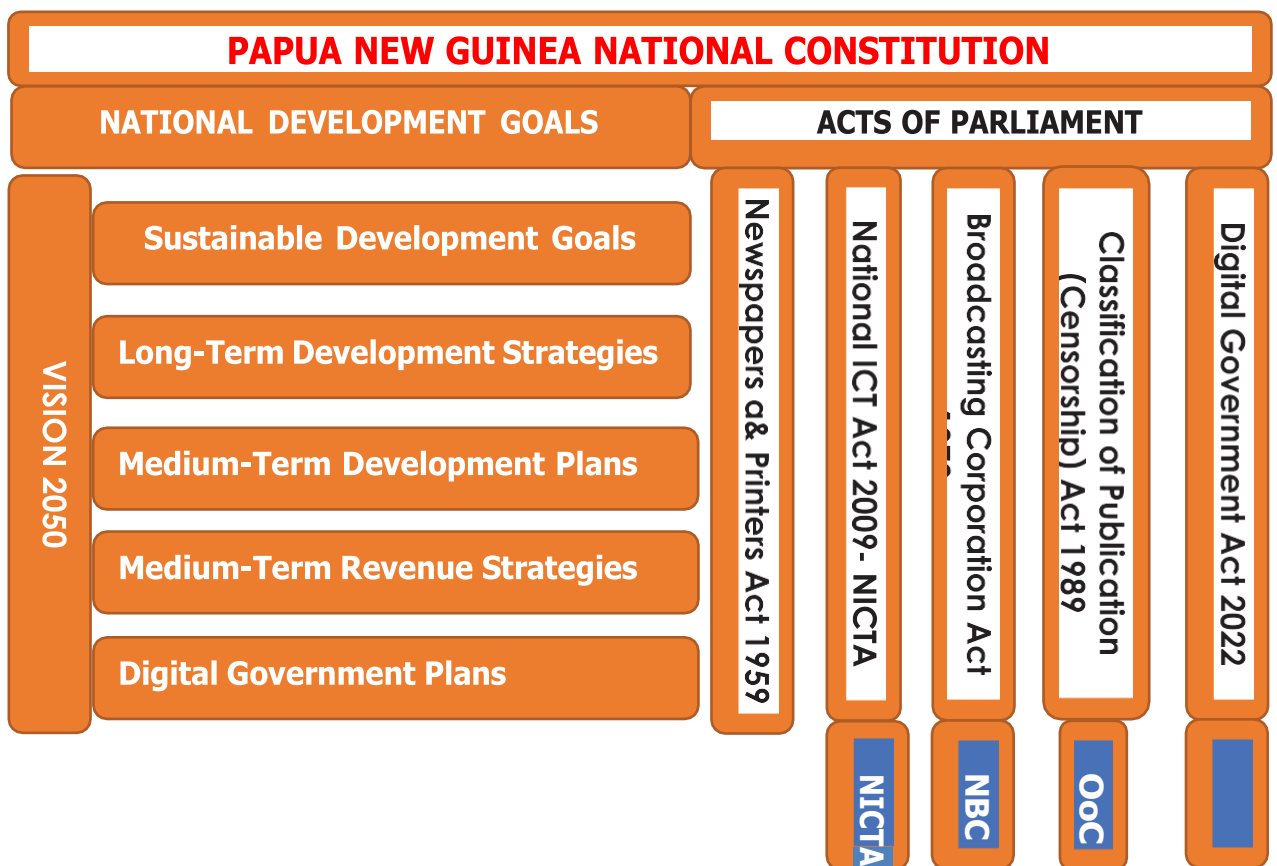


Figure 2: Cascading logic to illustrate the National Constitution, legislations, National Development Goals, policies, plans and strategies, and organizations.

### 3.1.1 National Constitution of Papua New Guinea

- a) The power to regulate and restrict the freedom of expression is prescribed within Section 46; and
- b) Section 38 of the Constitution specifically provides for the extent to regulate or restrict the right or freedom as prescribed.
- c) The statutory remedy for proposed National Media Commission (NMC) to seek legal remedies for enforcement of annual appropriation as provided for under Section 211 of the Constitution.

#### **National Goals and Directive Principles**

PNG's National Goals and Directive Principles outlined the five key Pillars. Integral Human Development is one pillar advocating for a holistic approach to the development of individuals and communities, taking into account social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions and Equity and Participation pillar emphasizes the importance of promoting social justice, equal opportunities, and active participation of all citizens in the development process. It aims to ensure that the benefits of development are shared equitably among the diverse population of PNG. It emphasizes the importance of empowering individuals and communities to participate in their own development and recognizes the interconnectedness of different aspects of development.

The aim is to promote the well-being of all individuals and communities through a comprehensive and integrated approach to development.

#### **Freedom of Expression**

The Constitution of PNG recognizes the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media. Section 46 of the Constitution specifically protects the right to receive and impart information without interference from public authorities, subject only to reasonable restrictions that are necessary in a democratic society. This provision is the foundation for the right to freedom of information in PNG.

#### **National Development Agenda**

The media creates and disseminates information that informs, educates and empower citizens. Media has the potential to support the achievement of key national development goals as set out in Papua New Guinea's development agenda including:

- a) Vision 2050
- b) Sustainable Development Goals 2030
- c) Long Term Development Strategy 2010 – 2030
- d) Medium-Term Development Plans
- e) Medium-Term Revenue Strategies
- f) Digital Government Plan 2023-2027



### 3.1.2 Government Act 2022

DICT is a government agency with responsibilities defined under the Digital Government Act 2022. The Digital Government Act 2022 has provided for relevant powers to lead, coordinate and implement the digital transformation agendas for the government. It is responsible for:

- a) Provide policy advice on matters pertaining to ICT, consistent with the Constitution; and
- b) Administer responsibilities prescribed under Section 1, Subsection (a), (b), and (c) of the Digital Government Act 2022.

### 3.1.3 National Information Communications Technology Act 2009

The National Information Communications Telecommunications Authority (NICTA) is mandated through the NICTA Act 2009 to;

- a) regulate and oversee the country's information and communications technology (ICT) sector, including the media; and
- b) license and register media outlets to ensure that media organizations operating in PNG, comply with the country's laws and regulations governing the media industry.

### 3.1.4 National Broadcasting Corporation Act 1973 (amended)

National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) is established through the Broadcasting Corporation Act 1973. The Act defines the scope, roles and responsibility for regulating and controlling broadcasting services. It is;

- a) a state-owned media organization; and
- b) provides broadcast radio and television services including government developmental news and events as well as educational and entertaining programs.

The main objectives of the Broadcasting Corporation Act of 1983;

- i. Established the National Broadcasting Corporation PNG to provide broadcasting services for the public
- ii. Ensures and directs broadcasting services are of high standard and provides for the cultural, educational, and entertainment needs of the people of PNG
- iii. Encourages the provision of local content in broadcasting services.
- iv. Defines the scope of regulation and control including the operation of government broadcasting services in PNG

### 3.1.5 Censorship Act 1989

Office of Censorship is mandated by the Classification of Publication (Censorship) Act 1989 to:

- a) Monitor media content to ensure that it is not offensive or defamatory, and enforce penalties against media organizations that violate the country's media laws; and
- b) Regulate films, books, newspapers, magazines, and other forms of media. The agency also had the power to ban or restrict media content that was deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.

### 3.1.6 National Cultural Commission Act

National Cultural Commission (NCC) of PNG mandated is by the NCC Act and tasked with the responsibility to:

- a) safeguarding PNG's cultural heritage and its cultural traditions; and
- b) promoting of local content.

The commission is mandated to have oversight on;

- i. Local content, including preservation, protection, development, and marketing of the traditional cultures of the indigenous peoples of PNG.
- ii. This includes the definition of roles and functions of the National Film Institute in producing and marketing with respect to the National Goal and Directive Principles Number 5 of the Constitution.

### 3.1.7 Media Council of PNG (MCPNG)

MCPNG is a registered Association responsible for overseeing:

- c) the governance of media code of ethics;
- d) matters relating to welfare of media professionals; and
- e) matters relating to safety and protection of media professionals.

### 3.1.8 Newspaper and Printers Act 1959

The Newspaper and Printers Act 1956 was legislated to;

- a) regulate the newspaper and printing industry and to ensure that publications are truthful, responsible, and not offensive to public morals.
- b) provide guidelines in which the Classification of Publication (Censorship) Act 1989 and Postal Service Act 1996 is reflective of it.

### 3.1.9 Other Laws and Policies

Other laws and policies define, stipulate and advocate for fairness in information, communication, production, and dissemination. They include but not limited to;

- a) Gender Equity and Social Inclusion,
- b) Human Rights Laws,
- c) Affirmation and Arbitration Laws, among others

# **SECTION FOUR: POLICY STATEMENTS & DIRECTIONS**

The following Key Focus Areas (KFA) will be implemented to achieve the objectives of this policy.

## 4.1 Legislative and Regulatory Environment

By enacting Media Development Law and undertaking consequential amendments, Papua New Guinea seeks to establish a modern, progressive, and responsible media environment that empowers the media industry to thrive while preserving the fundamental principles of freedom of expression and information.

### 4.1.1 Media Development Law

In recognition of the crucial role played by the media in information dissemination, there is a pressing need for better coordination among key stakeholders, including the government, media industry, and development partners, to further strengthen and expand the media as a primary medium of public information. While the Constitution of Papua New Guinea upholds freedom of speech, expression, and information, a clear policy direction and legislative framework are lacking to effectively translate these constitutional principles into workable strategies and policies.

To address this gap and foster the growth of the media industry in PNG, the National Media Development Policy presents a comprehensive policy direction with a focus on better coordination among all key stakeholders. The policy outlines the following strategic measures:

- a) **Establishment of the National Media Commission (NMC):** The NMC, as a Constitutional Body reporting to the National Parliament, will serve as a central coordinating body responsible for implementing the policy's objectives related to responsible journalism, mobilizing government media resources, and supporting mainstream news and multimedia. The Commission will play a pivotal role in guiding media development initiatives and ensuring ethical journalism practices.
- b) **Government Media Initiatives:** This provision aims to mobilize and unify government media organizations across national, provincial, and district levels. The coordinated efforts of these entities will enhance the dissemination of government information and news for public consumption, fostering transparency and accountability.
- c) **Enhancing Quality and Responsibility:** The policy emphasizes the importance of redefining rules and codes of conduct to ensure journalists adhere to ethical standards, promoting responsible journalism and accurate reporting. It will reinforce the principles of press freedom, access to information, and the protection of journalists' safety.

- d) **Legislation for Self-regulation:** To elevate media professionalism in Papua New Guinea and bring it in line with international best practices, the policy calls for the development of legislation focusing on self-regulation. This legislation will include provisions for a vibrant and active media arbitration body to receive complaints, ensure fairness, and provide appropriate redress for all stakeholders. It will also address accreditation of media organizations and personnel to uphold accountability and quality journalism.

#### 4.1.2 "Regulate to Self-regulate" in the Regulatory Environment

The regulatory environment in the media sector will be guided by the principle of "regulate to self-regulate." The government's role will primarily focus on creating a supportive framework that encourages self-regulation within the media industry. Instead of direct enforcement, the government will facilitate collaboration and cooperation by providing an enabling environment for media growth.

Under the "regulate to self-regulate" approach, media stakeholders will be responsible for effectively regulating themselves, ensuring compliance with standards related to accuracy, fairness, privacy, and conflicts of interest. This approach aims to maintain public trust, promote professional conduct, and protect the interests of the public without direct government intervention.

The "regulate to self-regulate" approach places the onus on media stakeholders to regulate themselves effectively, ensuring compliance with standards related to accuracy, fairness, privacy, and conflicts of interest. By doing so, the aim is to maintain public trust, promote professional conduct, and protect the interests of the public without direct government intervention.

To enhance the self-regulatory regime, the National Media Commission will be established with the following objectives:

- a) Facilitating collaboration among various stakeholders in the media industry, fostering a unified approach to media development.
- b) Providing guidance, and expertise to media organizations and professionals regarding self-regulatory standards and ethical journalism practices.
- c) Ensuring compliance with self-regulatory ethics and standards within media industry, promoting responsible and ethical journalism practices.
- d) Safeguard the public from harmful and inaccurate media content, ensuring the dissemination of reliable information.
- e) Actively supporting the development of media industry in PNG, contributing to its growth and sustainability.

- f) Uphold the principles of freedom of expression and information enshrined in the Constitution, fostering a media environment that values openness and transparency.
- g) Adopting a balanced and impartial approach in enforcing its functions, ensuring fairness and equity for all stakeholders.

### 4.1.3 Consequential Amendments

To achieve a coherent media development landscape in Papua New Guinea, consequential amendments to existing legislation are crucial. These amendments will align the regulatory environment with the objectives of the National Media Development Policy, ensuring a unified and effective framework for media growth.

The Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT), in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will undertake the following actions:

- a) facilitate the review of the National Information and Communications Technology Act 2009 (NICT Act 2009) to strengthen National Information and Communications Technology Authority's regulatory role concerning digital media and digital broadcasting. This will ensure that National Information and Communications Technology Authority's regulations are aligned with emerging trends and best practices in the media industry
- b) facilitate the consequential amendments of existing legislations relating to the media industry. This comprehensive review will redefine the roles and responsibilities of the government, media industry, professional bodies, development partners, and other stakeholders. The amendments will reflect the changing media landscape and technological advancements while upholding the principles of accountability, transparency, and professional journalism.

## 4.2 Media Quality

### 4.2.1 Quality and Responsibility

To ensure that media personnel produce high-quality, factual, and responsible content for public consumption, the National Media Development Policy emphasizes the importance of continuous training and equipping media professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge. Quality content is characterized by well-researched, substantiated, and educational information presented professionally, whether in writing or broadcasting, with attention to spelling, grammar, and pronunciation.

However, certain factors can contribute to a decline in content quality, such as outdated training materials, lack of regular upskilling opportunities, and insufficient incentives to drive a sense of involvement among media personnel. Therefore, checks and balances are necessary to uphold the production of quality content in the PNG media industry.

The advent of digital media, especially social media, has provided individuals with the opportunity to create and disseminate content for public consumption. While this presents new opportunities, it also comes with the challenge of ensuring that the content is factual and substantiated. The government recognizes that misinformation and disinformation can disrupt peace, public order, development initiatives, and tarnish reputations. Ensuring credibility is crucial for media organizations.

To promote quality and responsible reporting by media personnel, the Policy proposes for Legislation for self-regulation through;

- a) Professional development of media professionals and their association,
- b) empowering an independent and neutral professional body to develop and police the media code of conducts and ethics; and
- c) establishing a content arbitrary tribunal, embedded in law, to receive and investigate complaints on contents disseminated by media organizations and personnel or by any other individuals.

**Action:** The Government Media Advisory Committee, in consultation with media industry players and relevant key stakeholders, will develop strategic plans specific to provide for:

- i) accrediting the media organizations and personnel;
- ii) developing and enforcing media codes of conduct and ethics, ensuring adherence to responsible reporting practices; and
- iii) facilitating the establishment of a content arbitrary tribunal to receive and investigate complaints on contents disseminated by media organizations and personnel or by any other individuals.

#### 4.2.2 Training and Professional Development

Recognizing that media is a profession that requires specialized skills and knowledge to research, write, and disseminate information effectively, this policy places a strong emphasis on training and professional development for media personnel. Media professionals play a crucial role in breaking news, investigating important subjects, and reporting on a wide range of issues. To ensure accuracy and factual reporting, continuous training is essential to adapt to changing trends and practices in the media industry.

To promote and enhance the quality of media content, the policy proposes the following measures:

- a) **Introduce a Training and Accreditation Pathway:** Support and strengthen journalism schools to offer comprehensive training programs for aspiring media professionals.
- b) **Develop a Journalism Training Institute:** Establish a pathway for provisional accreditation through a journalism training institute to ensure foundational skills and knowledge.



- c) **Develop a Media Apprenticeship Program:** Provide opportunities training and on the job training for media professionals to assist them in attaining accreditation, allowing these students to gain practical experience and expertise in the field.
- d) **Promoting Mentorship and Counseling:** Encourage mentorship programs to foster professional growth and development for aspiring media professionals, ensuring a sustainable pipeline of talent in the industry.
- e) **Curriculum Development and Promotion of Media Literacy:**
  - a) Assess the need for and support the development of new curriculum at tertiary institutions relevant to PNG's national goals for development, cultural diversity, and emerging trends and technologies in the media industry.
  - b) Integrate media literacy into the education system at lower-level schools to equip students with the necessary skills to critically analyze and responsibly use media content.
  - c) Ensure that media courses and training programs promote cultural diversity and inclusion in the media industry, encouraging representation and diverse perspectives.
  - d) Encourage media industry employment to be based on accreditation, ensuring that media professionals meet the necessary standards and competencies.

**Action 1:** The National Media Commission will conduct an assessment study to identify the required skills and competencies for media professionals. The study will explore multi-skilling and employment pathways, curriculum upgrades at tertiary institutions, media literacy initiatives for consumers, and specific skill-sets to promote cultural diversity and inclusion.

**Action 2:** Implementing education and training programs, awareness campaigns, and initiatives to educate citizens about media literacy and responsible media consumption:

- i) Integrate media literacy into the education system to equip students with critical thinking skills when engaging with media content.
- ii) Conduct campaigns to raise awareness among citizens about responsible media usage.
- iii) Organize training sessions for media producers to develop content that is accurate, diverse, and representative.
- iv) Establish centers to provide access to technology and training for the public and media personnel.

- v) initiatives to track the impact of media literacy programs and to identify areas for improvements or adjustments.
- vi) Support research initiatives to evaluate the impact of media literacy programs and identify areas for improvement.
- vii) Collaborate with stakeholders and institutions to support media literacy initiatives and development programs.

### 4.2.3 Media Employee Welfare

Recognizing the vital role of media organizations and practitioners as conveyors of information that shapes public perception on national issues, the Policy acknowledges the potential risks and challenges that media personnel face in their line of work. Media serves as a watchdog, exposing bad practices by both government and private individuals, which sometimes triggers hostility from those aggrieved by the information publicized. Thus, ensuring the welfare and safety of media personnel is of utmost importance to contribute to national development and promote media professionalism.

The Policy provision on 'Welfare' aims to safeguard media personnel and enhance their job satisfaction and commitment to the industry. It includes the following measures:

- a) **Protection and Safety of Media Personnel:** Implement appropriate strategies and review existing legal frameworks to include measures for the safety and protection of media personnel while they carry out their duties.
- b) **Welfare Packages and Job Security:** Establish welfare packages and job security measures for media personnel, providing them with a sense of satisfaction and long-term prospects for employment. This will promote a committed and involved workforce, ultimately enhancing the quality of media content in PNG.
- c) **Ensuring Fair Compensation for Media Personnel:** To ensure proper and fair compensation, the policy empowers a neutral professional body, embedded in law, to assess and recommend salaries and remuneration for media personnel in line with relevant laws of PNG. This will create a media landscape that is accountable, ethical, and capable of effectively disseminating information to the public.

**Action:** The National Media Commission in consultation with relevant stakeholders will assess and recommend fair compensation for media personnel. Provisions for the safety and protection of media personnel to be considered in the National Media Law.

## 4.2.4 Government Support

Recognizing the significant role of a vibrant and independent media industry in promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic principles, the government of Papua New Guinea is committed to providing strong support for the media sector. The government upholds the freedom of the press and ensures non-interference in media activities to foster an environment that encourages a diverse and responsible media landscape.

The Policy provision on government support outlines a range of initiatives to strengthen the media industry and promote its growth:

- a) **Continuous monitoring and evaluation:** The NMC in consultation with stakeholders will monitor and evaluate industry trends, practices, and developments
- b) **Resourcing for Sustainable Development:** The government will allocate annual funding to support sustainable media development initiatives. By providing a reliable funding mechanism through a trust account in line with constitutional guarantees, the government aims to foster long-term growth and stability in the media industry
- c) **Partnership with media organizations:** Collaborations and partnerships between the government, media organizations, and media professionals will be encouraged to address challenges collectively and foster a conducive environment for media development.
- d) **Development partners:** The National Media Commission in consultation with DICT will oversee the implementation of programs and projects provided by multinational and bilateral development partners, leveraging external support for media industry development.
- e) **Accessibility:** The Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC) will be established for the purpose of mobilization, rationalization, and coordination of government media, infrastructure, and utilities to provide reliable communications infrastructure, ensuring efficient access to information and effective dissemination, thereby promoting transparency and inclusivity.

**Action:** The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), along with the National Media Commission (NMC), Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC) and relevant agencies, will take the lead in implementing these initiatives and promoting the growth of a thriving media industry in PNG.

## 4.3 Media Mobilization

### 4.3.1 Ownership, Content and Monetisation

Promoting diversity, inclusion, monetization, and local content in the media landscape is a key focus of this policy. Media plays a crucial role in informing society about news and events that might otherwise go unnoticed, giving voice to underrepresented communities and issues. The government recognizes that a lack of diversity in media ownership and content can affect the quality and range of stories reported. Therefore, the policy aims to address these challenges and ensure a vibrant, inclusive, and representative media industry.

#### a) ***Diversity and Representation***

The Policy recognizes the importance of promoting diversity and representation in the media landscape. This policy encourages gender, persons with special needs, ethnic, and marginalized groups in society to join and play an active role. The goal is to ensure that the media reflects the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of Papua New Guinea.

#### b) ***Local Content Development and Monetization***

The Policy seeks to develop and monetize local content in the media. The government will focus on supporting the creation and distribution of content that is relevant to rural communities, promoting citizen engagement and participation. Additionally, efforts will be made to protect the intellectual property rights of content creators, allowing them to have control over their original works and monetize.

#### c) ***Community Media and Independent Outlets***

To increase representation of local voices, the Policy encourages the establishment of community media that covers sports, cultural events, and other local activities. Furthermore, efforts will be made to promote independent media outlets, including online platforms that are run by MSMEs, that offer alternative perspectives and enhance media diversity.

#### d) ***Indigenous Ownership***

Encouraging diversity of media ownership, with a particular emphasis on ownership by indigenous Papua New Guineans, is a priority. This will ensure that the core values of the multilingual people of Papua New Guinea are reflected in the media landscape.

#### e) ***Gender Equality and Youth Programs***

The policy aims to promote gender equality in the media sector and encourage youth media programs. These initiatives will empower young people and ensure that their perspectives and talents are represented in the media.

#### f) ***Collaboration and Awareness***

The Policy encourages collaboration with Christian media outlets and raises awareness of climate change and environmental conservation, among other important matters through media channels.

#### g) ***International Market Exposure***

The Policy seeks to market local content internationally, promoting Papua New Guinean culture, language, and traditions on a global stage.

**Action 1:** The DICT and NMC will provide policy advisory to the Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC) to develop a comprehensive strategy for national media content, ownership, and monetization. This strategy will encompass measures to promote diversity, support community media, encourage relevant content for rural communities, empower independent outlets, and protect content creators' intellectual property.

**Action 2:** To ensure the promotion and encouragement of local content, the legislation specific to media will provide incentive to local content provider within Papua New Guinea. This will help bolster the production and dissemination of local content, further enhancing representation and diversity in the media industry.

### 4.3.2 **Accessibility and Efficiency**

Ensuring accessibility and efficiency in media dissemination is crucial for effective public information sharing in Papua New Guinea. The success of information dissemination relies heavily on the availability of proper infrastructure and communication networks. Unfortunately, many parts of the country struggle with connectivity issues, posing significant challenges for media accessibility and efficient content distribution.

To address these challenges and promote information dissemination for the public, the Policy outlines the following initiatives:

#### a) ***Infrastructure Development and Partnerships***

The Government will take the lead, through its relevant agencies, in forging partnerships to roll out and maintain necessary infrastructure. This includes general infrastructure such as airstrips, roads, bridges, wharves, jetties, and navigational aids, which are crucial for media access. Additionally, there will be efforts to expand quality, reliable, and affordable media access by investing in ICT and media infrastructure.

#### b) ***Migration to Digital Broadcasting***

The Policy supports the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting, using digital technologies. Digital Broadcasting provides each station with additional channels which they can use to run additional programs. Since less radio spectrum is used for each station and there is no need to have guard channels as a result, the spectrum used can now be freed up and used for other connectivity projects.

At its core is the strategic use of the "digital dividend," repurposing spectrum for national gain. The amount of money that the Government gains from re-using this spectrum for another purpose is called the Digital Dividend. In here it offers two key pathways:

- i) enhancing broadcasting services with diverse programs, (e.g. provision of more programmes, high or ultra-high definition, or mobile television).
- ii) exploring mobile broadband services.

Additionally, it recognizes the newfound ability to use guard spaces and white spaces responsibly, promoting their utilization for various applications. These white spaces are the portions of spectrum left unused by broadcasting, also referred to as interleaved spectrum. The National Information and Communications Technology Authority (NICTA) plays a pivotal role in executing this directive, ensuring the efficient allocation of unused spectrum. Overall, the directive seeks to advance broadcasting capabilities, foster technological growth, and contribute to broader connectivity goals.

c) ***Establishing Community Information Networks***

Strategies will be developed to establish community information networks and empower local human resources, especially women, persons with disabilities and indigenous group to extend the dissemination of information to rural communities. Collaborating with local organizations will help bridge the gap in media accessibility, making information available to all Papua New Guineans, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.

d) ***24/7 Access to Information***

The government will strive to ensure access to information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This includes encouraging free-to-air channels on all government-owned TV stations and coordinating government media through the Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC).

e) ***Mobile Broadband***

Efforts will be made to enable wider reach of media services to rural and remote areas by promoting the availability of alternate technologies and shared spectrum.

**Action:** The DICT will provide policy advisory to the Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC) to develop a comprehensive strategy on accessibility and efficiency. The strategy will focus on partnership approaches with communication and media infrastructure providers, supporting the migration to digital broadcasting, establishing community information networks, and ensuring professional training and accreditation for journalists and media practitioners to maintain quality in media content packaging.

## **SECTION FIVE: ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

## 5.1 National Media Commission

In the ever-evolving landscape of Media in the digital age, PNG recognizes the critical importance of collaboration, self-regulation, and responsible media practice. To this end, this policy proposes to establish a pivotal entity, the National Media Commission (NMC) to promote; collaboration, self-regulation, and responsible media practices. The NMC aims to foster a vibrant and diverse media landscape that upholds transparency, accountability, and professionalism.

The functions of the PNG NMC will include:

- a) **Facilitating Collaboration among Stakeholders:** The NMC will work closely with relevant stakeholders such as media organizations, civil society groups, journalists, and government agencies to foster cooperation, exchange ideas, and develop effective policies and guidelines for responsible media practices.
- b) **Promote Self-Regulation:** The NMC will promote the importance of self-regulation within the media industry. It raises awareness among media organizations and professionals about the benefits of self-regulatory mechanisms, such as maintaining high ethical standards, ensuring accuracy in reporting, and protecting the interests of the public. Additionally, the NMC will have the power to seek judicial enforcement of annual appropriation.
- c) **Providing Guidance on Ethical Journalism:** The NMC will offer guidance and expertise to media organizations and professionals regarding self-regulatory standards and ethical journalism. It assists in the development and implementation of guidelines, codes of conduct, and best practices to ensure responsible media behavior.
- d) **Ensuring Compliance of standards:** The NMC will ensure compliance with self-regulatory standards within the media industry. It monitors media organizations and professionals to ensure they adhere to ethical principles, promote accountability, and maintain transparency in their practices. In cases of non-compliance to ethics and standards, the commission may provide guidance to rectify the issues
- e) **Promoting Responsible and Ethical Journalism:** The NMC will promote responsible and ethical journalism in PNG. It advocates for accurate and unbiased reporting, encourages respect for privacy and human rights, and discourages the dissemination of harmful or inaccurate media content that may negatively impact the public.
- f) **Protecting the Public:** The NMC seeks to protect the public from harmful or inaccurate media content. It takes measures to address issues such as misinformation, hate speech, and any form of media content that may pose a threat to the well-being and interests of the public.



- g) **Supporting Media Development:** The NMC will support the development of the media industry in PNG. It provides resources, training programs, resources, expertise and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the professionalism and standards of media organizations and professionals.
- h) **Respecting Freedom of Expression and Information:** The NMC respects the principles of freedom of expression and information enshrined in the Constitution of PNG. It ensures that any actions taken by the commission are within the boundaries of the law and do not infringe upon the rights of individuals or organizations to express themselves freely.
- i) **Balancing and Impartial Enforcement:** The NMC will adopt a balanced and impartial approach in enforcing its functions. It considers the diversity of media outlets in the country and strives to maintain a vibrant and diverse media landscape that serves the public interest.
- j) **Dispute Resolution:** The NMC plays a role in resolving disputes related to media content and ethics. It establishes mechanisms for handling complaints from the public, individuals, or organizations regarding media practices. The commission will receive and use its discretion to either resolve or refer the matter to an independent tribunal. The tribunal will be established by law.

### 5.1.1 Government Media Advisory Committee

A Government Media Advisory Committee (GMAC) will be established within the NMC to mobilise, rationalise, and coordinate government media, infrastructure, and utilities. The Government through the GMAC will mobilise and coordinate media and public relations organisations from national to provincial levels to provide wider dissemination of government information and news for public consumption.

The GMAC's functions will include:

- a) Manage the coordination of the National Media Content, and the Government Information flow in the public media through National Information Centre.
- b) Manage the public media assets to ensure their efficient and effective use for the benefit of the public.
- c) Provide timely updates to the government on issues related to public media development through other media and public relations organizations.

### 5.1.2 National Media Content

The Government Media Advisory Committee will rationalize and coordinate the National Media Content with the following objectives:

- a) Develop strategies to encourage the Trust Funding, Production, and Distribution of local digital content locally and internationally.
- b) Coordinate the production of local content to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) throughout the country and distribute it through different media platforms.
- c) Explore capacity building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of aspiring Papua New Guinean content creators.
- d) Establish and promote an incentive program to stimulate the creation and inclusion of more local content and to work in collaboration with existing media organizations, both domestic and international (subject to the powers of the Censorship Board).
- e) Promote local content globally to showcase the cultural richness and diversity of PNG.
- f) Coordinate a response to a serious risk of threat of public health, safety, welfare or national security upon advice from NEC.

### 5.1.3 National Information Centre

Under the coordination of the Government Media Advisory Committee and Department of Information and Communication Technology, the government will establish a National Information Centre (NIC) with the following objectives:

- a) To provide accurate, timely and relevant information about government policies, programs and services;
- b) To enhance government transparency and accountability
- c) To foster public participation in governance and decision-making process
- d) To combat misinformation and promote fact-based decision making.
- e) To standardize government information dissemination.

The National Information Centre will consist of a news website as a one-stop information hub, a state newspaper covering in-depth government policies and their impact on citizens, and a 24-hour news free-to-air TV channel broadcasting news and current affairs content.

#### 5.1.4 Government Information Flow

The National Information Centre will coordinate the dissemination of government information through various mediums, including official websites, social media, mobile apps, media conferences, and briefings, newsletters, pamphlets, advertisements, and bulletin. These channels will ensure regular updates and information reach the public effectively and efficiently.

Through this collaboration, the government information flow will be coordinated:

- a) through a centralised hub for disseminating government information, such as Government Information Portal.
- b) By creating a Government Press Club to facilitate streamlined and efficient communication.

#### 5.2 Public Institutions

Under the guidance of the Government Media Advisory Committee, key public institutions within the Government will lead the coordination and mobilisation of government news and information for dissemination:

- c) Department of Information and Communication Technology will provide policy advisory support to the Government Media Advisory Committee and facilitate National Information Centre while relaying government content through various media platforms.
- d) The Prime Minister's Media Unit will facilitate the distribution of news and information from the Office of the Prime Minister and verify news and contents related to the Government and the office of the Prime Minister.
- e) National Film Institute under the purview of the Ministry of ICT assume a significant role tailored to its unique functions. Ensuring alignment with this policy's objectives, the National Film Institute's responsibilities will be articulated as follows:
  - i. **Cultural Documentary Production and Preservation:** Spearhead the production and preservation of cultural documentaries, showcasing PNG's rich cultural heritage. Collaborate with the PNG National Archives to ensure the effective archiving of culturally significant films.
  - ii. **Content Contribution to Government Media:** Provide culturally relevant films and documentaries for dissemination through government media platforms including National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). Collaborate with NBC for the contribution of content aligned with national and developmental themes.

- iii. **Collaboration with National Cultural Commission:** Continue to work with the National Cultural Commission and other relevant institutions to align film initiatives with broader cultural promotion goals. Collaborate with PNG National Archives for archiving films of cultural and historical significance.
  - iv. **Public Engagement and Education:** Utilize NFI's platform to actively engage the public in the appreciation of Papua New Guinea's film heritage. Enhance public awareness through the dissemination of culturally significant films via free-to-air TV, contributing to the policy's goals of media literacy and public engagement.
- f) Government media to run documentary programs to educate general populace on matters of national importance and for development.
  - g) Government owned medias to provide 24-hour free-to-air TV and media information service focusing on local and development content.
  - h) Government owned medias to migrate from analog to digital
  - i) The National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC);
    - i. In collaboration with other government owned media to broadcast and archive national events in consultation with PNG National Achieves and provide a 24-hour free-to-air TV and media information service with a focus on local and development content.
    - ii. To take a leading role in establishing a development-centered daily newspaper that shall be printed and distributed in 22 provinces.
    - iii. To collaborate with National Cultural Commission, PNG Tourism Promotion Authority, National Film Institute, and other stakeholders to tailor-make, promote and market local content domestically and internationally.
    - iv. to broadcast and archive in consultation with PNG National Achieves in full the national events not limited to;
      - Parliamentary sittings
      - Parliamentary committee hearings
      - Government policy consultations
      - Tribunal hearings
      - Annual budget lock up session
      - Tribunal hearings
      - Other events of national significance

## **SECTION SIX: RESEARCH, MONITORING & EVALUATION**

The Policy will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. The NMC will oversee monitoring and evaluation of the media sector.

Key areas of monitoring and evaluation include but not limited to:

- i) Access to information,
- ii) Media content,
- iii) Media diversity and Inclusivity,
- iv) Media code of conducts and ethics,
- v) Media self-regulation,
- vi) Media freedom and protection,
- vii) Media Development, and
- viii) Impact on democracy.

## **ANNEX**

- 1. Executive Summary** - In summary, see annex in tabulated form below, the diagnosis, interventions, mechanisms and outcomes anticipated in, and through, this policy.

**Executive Summary** – The diagnosis, interventions, mechanisms and outcomes anticipated in, and through, this policy.

<b>DIAGNOSIS ON NEED OF NATIONAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT POLICY</b>	<b>POLICY INTERVENTIONS FOCUS</b>	<b>POLICY MECHANISMS</b>	<b>OUTCOMES ANTICIPATED</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• never been one since independence;</li> <li>• need for one for next 50 years</li> <li>• coming of age of PNG &amp; need to harness own media for national development</li> <li>• media diversity in content through more indigenous ownership of PNG as a linguistically and culturally diverse peoples</li> <li>• media entrepreneurship opportunities for profit and wealth creation</li> <li>• economic input through taxes, employment &amp; promotion of businesses through news and advertising</li> </ul>	<p><b>Overall Umbrella Policy:</b> to appreciation, harness, mobilise, enhance, partner with media sector and practitioners in national development</p>	<p><b>Umbrella Policy</b> on National Media Development Policy: A new era for media excellence</p>	<p>Media Policy Concluded; Endorsed by NEC, Presented in Parliament with a Ministerial Statement</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aged, obsolete media legislation</li> <li>• legislation to protect media, media personnel to perform duty without fear or favour; and for salaries, benefits &amp; welfare of practitioners;</li> <li>• legislation to affirm self-regulation to protect media’s role as fourth estate;</li> <li>• legislation to access govt information for publicity for</li> </ul>	<p>Legislative to update media laws for legal framework for media to function including protection from government interference, for salaries, entitlements and welfare and protection in line with duty and for access to government information</p>	<p><b>Overarching Legislation:</b> to have “fourth estate” role elevated with establishment of a constitutional body reporting to Parliament in the form of an independent National Media Commission including <b>subordinate and/or amended new or existing laws</b> for freedom of access to information, accreditation,</p>	<p>Legislation(s) Concluded and implementation facilitated (List of legislations required)</p>

<p>public good, transparency &amp; accountability in PNG as democratic state;</p>	<p>in line with principles of good governance, transparency and accountability in PNG as democratic state</p>	<p>protection, welfare including salaries and benefits of media practitioners and needed institutionalization and/or mechanisms for self-regulation</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PINA concerns and resolution to work with govt to protect “fourth estate”</li> <li>• Fueled by size of economies of Small Islands States and annual returns to sustainably resource self regulation and professional media development &amp; training</li> </ul>	<p>Protection of “fourth estate” role of media as a democratic institution</p>	<p><b>Overarching Legislation:</b> to have “fourth estate” role elevated with establishment of a constitutional body reporting to Parliament in the form of an independent National Media Commission including <b>subordinate and/or amended new or existing laws</b> for freedom of access to information, accreditation, protection, welfare including salaries and benefits of media practitioners and needed institutionalization and/or mechanisms for self regulation</p>	<p>Legislation(s) Concluded and implementation facilitated</p> <p>Signing of MOA with PINA and with Media Council of Papua New Guinea in line with legislation(s).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes to multimedia from traditional print, radio &amp; television</li> <li>• revolutionary entry of internet &amp; social media with its discontents</li> <li>• abuse of social media</li> </ul>	<p>Draft or adopt/adapt legislation to hold multimedia users including newspapers use of internet and social media accountable</p>	<p><b>Specific, relevant subordinate and/or amended new or existing laws</b> including NICTA Act and Newspapers and Printers Act for multimedia users including social media</p>	<p>National Media Commission to oversee, monitor and come up with processes of adjudication aside from the NICTA function and a relevant Newspaper and Printers Authority (from amendment of the old Newspapers and Printers Act 1959).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drop in media quality in mainstream media – both newspapers and broadcasting</li> </ul>	<p>Establish Public Private Partnership for Professional Media Development including training, establishment of self regulation mechanisms like</p>	<p>DICT with National Media Commission</p>	<p>National Media Commission to oversee, monitor and come up with processes of adjudication aside from the NICTA function and a relevant Newspaper and Printers</p>



	<p>professional accreditation to own body manned by own independent, impartial &amp; quality conscious advocate professional peers</p>		<p>Authority (from amendment of the old Newspapers and Printers Act 1959).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• media access to rural, remote unreached</li> <li>• media diversity in ownership</li> <li>• media content quota &amp; production</li> </ul>	<p>Rationalisation of Government media access  Roll-out of ICT infrastructure &amp; utilities to serve the unserved  Promote and resource new or existing indigenously owned media  Promote, resource &amp; reward diverse local content production and negotiate quota for usage in mainstream media – both government and private.</p>	<p>Government Media Advisory Committee to work with National Media Commission and its PPP with Media Council of Papua New Guinea as well as Government Bodies responsible  (list the govt bodies).</p>	<p>Government Media Advisory Committee to facilitate rationalization review of government media, government media infrastructure, media ownership and recommend specific actions and initiatives like including new infrastructure, tower-sharing, promotion and support of indigenously own media, content production and negotiation through National Media Commission on quota arrangements.</p>

