

MARCH 2025, HARARE



ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Information,
Publicity and Broadcasting
Services

ZIMBABWE MEDIA POLICY



Promoting Media Excellence, Diversity and National Development



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FOREWORD

It is with a profound sense of commitment to the principles of democracy and national development that the Zimbabwe Media Policy is presented. As enshrined in our Constitution, freedom of expression and universal access to information are fundamental rights that serve as the bedrock for a vibrant, democratic society. These tenets are not merely aspirational, they are integral to the realization of our national blueprints which have been meticulously crafted by the Second Republic Administration as we strive towards achieving Vision 2030.

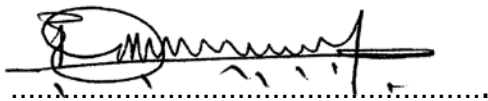
The Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) laid the groundwork for a transformative media reform agenda aimed at creating a national media landscape that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the Zimbabwean people. As we advance with our National Development Strategies, we are tasked with deepening and completing these reforms, ensuring that our media sector plays a decisive role in enhancing our democratic ideals and articulating the rich tapestry of values that define us as a people. A vibrant and accessible media sector is essential for unity and cohesion among our citizens. It empowers Zimbabweans to share their stories, perspectives and experiences, thereby fostering a sense of ownership over our national narrative. This vision for our media landscape necessitates the integration of various components, including investment; development; storage; retrieval; collection; and distribution of media products into a cohesive and dynamic industry.

The implementation of this Policy will pave the way for the development of a robust media infrastructure, ensuring that every Zimbabwean citizen can effortlessly access a wealth of information. The tools we propose for the broadcasting and print media sectors are designed to serve our collective goal of universal access to information, promoting inclusivity and enhancing the national audience support base necessary for the sector's growth. A pivotal aspect of this initiative is the principle of co-regulation within the media industry. While the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) has been established to safeguard media freedoms and regulate the sector, it is imperative that

media practitioners also cultivate self-regulatory frameworks. The envisioned co-regulatory framework will play a crucial role in upholding professional standards and ethics, thereby ensuring that our media fraternity adheres to the highest regional and global practices.

I urge all stakeholders, Government Ministries, business entities, professional bodies, cultural and artistic groups and media practitioners, to unite in the realisation of the objectives set forth in this policy. The collective effort to forge a strong media industry is vital for achieving our Vision 2030 aspirations. Moreover, a thriving media sector is poised to make significant contributions to our national economy, generating employment opportunities and enhancing our competitiveness in regional and global markets.

Let us harness our collective creativity and determination to make the Zimbabwe Media Policy a resounding success. Together, we can build a media landscape that reflects the diverse voices of our nation, strengthens our democracy, and propels Zimbabwe into a prosperous future.



His Excellency, DR.E.D. Mnangagwa

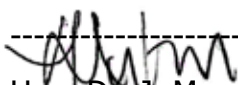
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

PREFACE

The Zimbabwe Media Policy is a ground-breaking framework designed to foster a thriving, diverse, and inclusive media landscape. The Policy is a crucial step towards realising our national vision of becoming an empowered upper-middle-income society by 2030, as outlined in our national development strategies.

The media plays a vital role in informing, educating, and empowering citizens to contribute to national development. It promotes transparency, predictability, and accountability, while rallying citizens behind national development goals. The mission is to shape a lasting national consciousness that defends, upholds, and promotes Zimbabwe's founding values, identity, and interests worldwide through a modern, diverse, and participatory media industry.

The Policy is the first integrated and comprehensive attempt to outline the guiding principles and philosophy underpinning Zimbabwe's media, laws, and regulations. It's a critical step towards developing a vibrant media industry that contributes significantly to economic growth, while positively impacting the lives of Zimbabweans.



Hon. Dr. J. Muswere (MP)

MINISTER OF INFORMATION, PUBLICITY AND BROADCASTING SERVICES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Zimbabwe Media Policy would not have been possible without the collective efforts and contributions of various stakeholders. The aim was to come up with a blueprint that would improve the media landscape in Zimbabwe.

I take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who played a role in coming up with this Policy. On behalf of the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, I would like to acknowledge all stakeholders, members of staff from the Ministry and our Consultant for making this Policy a reality through their contributions and commitment.

The Government reaffirms its unwavering commitment to implementing this Policy, which embodies the collective aspirations and desires of the Zimbabwean people.


.....

N. Mangwana

SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION, PUBLICITY AND BROADCASTING SERVICES



Question and answer session.



The new dispensation introduced post cabinet Media briefing session to support media growth



Question and answer session.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Zimbabwe Media Policy is a comprehensive framework designed to promote a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive media in Zimbabwe. The Policy aims to foster an environment that supports access to information and the growth of a competitive and innovative media industry.

It is anchored on six (6) strategic pillars that aim to promote a vibrant, diverse, and independent media sector. The first pillar, Economic Sustainability, focuses on revitalising the media sector's financial stability by diversifying revenue streams, establishing the Media Fund, and encouraging media outlets to explore alternative revenue sources. The remaining pillars include Digital Transformation and Innovation, which aims to address digital challenges and promote innovation; Media Development and Capacity Building, which focuses on supporting community radio stations and freelance content producers; Media Sovereignty and Regulation, which seeks to establish a balanced regulatory framework; Access to Information and Knowledge, which aims to promote inclusive access to information; and Local Content Promotion, which aims to promote local content and counter foreign dominance.

Broadly, the Policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) to unwaveringly defend Zimbabwe's image, sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- (b) to fully implement, achieve and actualise all Constitutional provisions that promote the growth and development of a vibrant, diverse media industry in Zimbabwe;
- (c) to develop and enforce comprehensive codes of ethics, raising standards of media practices in Zimbabwe;
- (d) to promote professionalism and capacitate the media industry;
- (e) to achieve a strong and converged digital economy;
- (f) to transform Zimbabwe's media landscape through the development of modern, efficient, and sustainable infrastructure;

- (g) to nurture and instil national values, ethics and citizenship, promoting a shared understanding of Zimbabwe's history, vision, and developmental aspirations;
- (h) to advance and protect Zimbabwe's national interests, promoting the country's economic, cultural and political well-being;
- (i) to assert and maintain Zimbabwe's media sovereignty, ensuring the country's independence and self-determination in the production, dissemination, and regulation of media content;
- (j) to foster a linguistically inclusive media landscape in Zimbabwe, where all officially recognised languages are valued, promoted, and used to reach diverse audiences and communities;
- (k) to govern the whole sector including internet-based broadcasting as an objective; and
- (l) to promote media viability and sustainability.

The Policy Vision is to create a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive media sector that promotes local narrative shaping, empowers Zimbabweans to participate in national development, and advances national interests for the achievement of an upper-middle-income society by 2030. Its Mission is to foster a vibrant media sector that promotes national consciousness, defends, upholds, and promotes Zimbabwe's interests and aspirations worldwide, while showcasing its rich cultural heritage.

The Zimbabwe Media Policy framework is also set to address various general policy issues, including the development of comprehensive codes of standards, a legal framework to regulate the media, and measures to prevent sexual harassment in media houses. The Policy will also establish a National Employment Council for the media industry, regulate media practitioner training, and implement penalties to ensure compliance with rules and standards. Furthermore, the Policy acknowledges the need to harmonise multiple media regulatory platforms, including those governing telecommunications and ICT. For foreign journalists, the Policy will require security clearances, local accreditation, and payment of prescribed fees, with additional requirements for those reporting on Zimbabwe's wildlife and media houses reporting on Zimbabwean content.

The Policy will be implemented through a multi-stakeholder approach, involving Government ministries, regulatory bodies, media organisations, and the private sector. A Media Sector Steering Committee will be established to oversee policy implementation, ensure coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, and provide technical guidance and support.

The successful implementation of this Policy is expected to yield a more diverse and pluralistic media sector, improved media regulation, increased access to information technologies, enhanced capacity and skills among media professionals and stakeholders.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
HEXCO	Higher Education Examinations Council
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
MAZ	Media Alliance of Zimbabwe
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
NDS 1	National Development Strategy 1
NDS 2	National Development Strategy 2
NEC	National Employment Council
POTRAZ	Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe
PSC	Public Service Commission
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZIMCHE	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education
ZMC	Zimbabwe Media Commission
ZMP	Zimbabwe Media Policy

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The ongoing restructuring of Zimbabwe's media landscape is driving growth and development, fostering a more dynamic and diverse environment for information dissemination and communication. This transformation is facilitated by the rise of digital media and online platforms, which has increased the diversity of the later and allowed a wider range of voices and perspectives to emerge beyond traditional media outlets. The restructuring is also pushing for improved journalistic practices and ethical standards, enhancing the overall quality of media content. Furthermore, the shift towards digital media is enabling greater audience engagement, allowing audiences to participate in discussions, share their opinions, and contribute content, promoting a more participatory media environment.

Ultimately, the restructuring of Zimbabwe's media landscape is proving to be a catalyst for growth and development, contributing not only to the media sector itself but also to the broader socio-economic fabric of the country. As the media continues to evolve, it holds the potential to play an essential role in shaping public opinion and fostering democratic governance.

1.2. Situation Analysis

The media sector in Zimbabwe is undergoing significant transformation, driven by the convergence of technological advancements, shifting consumer behaviors, and evolving regulatory frameworks. The traditional media landscape is giving way to a more diverse and dynamic ecosystem, characterised by the proliferation of digital media platforms, online news sites, and community radio stations. However, despite these positive developments, the sector still faces significant challenges, gaps and opportunities as follows:

1.2.1. The Broadcasting Sector

The Zimbabwe's broadcasting landscape is shifting, driven by reforms that prioritise constitutional alignment and community-led broadcasting. Below, is an array of emerging challenges, gaps, and untapped opportunities for the broadcasting sub-space:

- (a) the rapid growth of social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp is leading to a shift in advertising spending, as brands increasingly migrate from traditional mainstream media to these digital channels;
- (b) the delayed Digital Terrestrial Migration project, combined with a low uptake of emerging technologies and a shortage of skilled Information Communication Technologies (ICT) professionals, is hindering Zimbabwe's competitiveness in the rapidly evolving global media industry;
- (c) local communities lack the capacity to sustain community radio stations, exacerbated by limited funding opportunities, scarce sponsored programming, inadequate advertising support, and insufficient community-led initiatives;
- (d) prohibitive costs of data packages limit the online presence of community radio stations hindering their capacity to reach transnational and diaspora audiences;
- (e) the commercial potential of freelance content producers in Zimbabwe remains untapped due to knowledge gaps and inadequate structural support, hindering their ability to successfully market and monetize their content;
- (f) professionalism in the Media Industry; and
- (g) limited advertising revenue.

1.2.2. The Print Media Sector

The Zimbabwe's print media landscape remains resilient, boasting numerous independent and vibrant outlets. These publications continue to serve as essential pillars of democracy, upholding freedom of expression and facilitating access to information. However, the following emerging challenges, gaps and untapped opportunities exist:

- (a) the print media sector is struggling to maintain its financial viability, as the proliferation of online news sources and social media platforms provides

- readers with free access to content, thereby diverting revenue away from traditional media outlets;
- (b) the scarcity of newsprint on the local market has become a significant challenge for the sector;
 - (c) the absence of innovative and adaptable business models that effectively respond to the disruptions caused by digitalisation and the rise of online content, leaving traditional media outlets struggling to remain viable;
 - (d) in spite of the establishment of the Community Newspaper Group in 1891, community newspapers are struggling and most are now defunct. The development has worsened the provision of community news in local languages and all constitutionally recognized languages;
 - (e) the erosion of media sovereignty due to the unchecked importation of foreign publications, which operate outside the scope of local regulations and oversight;
 - (f) poor access to advanced software and technology to identify misinformation, disinformation, fake news and Artificial Intelligence generated content; and
 - (g) many print media outlets in Zimbabwe struggle to access funding, making it difficult to invest in new technology, training, and other resources needed to remain competitive.

1.3. Rationale of the Policy

The Zimbabwe Media Policy fosters a vibrant, diverse, and independent media sector that drives economic growth and ensures universal access to information for all, ***leaving no one and no place behind***. This creates an environment where every citizen can access accurate and reliable information, enabling all to make informed decisions and participate in the country's development. The Zimbabwe Media Policy is deeply rooted in His Excellency the President, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa's famous philosophy of "***Nyika Inovakwa Nevene Vayo/Ilizwe Lakhiwa Ngabanikazi Balo***," which encapsulates a deep-rooted belief in self-reliance, national pride and the empowerment of Zimbabweans to drive their country's progress. This philosophy is reflected in several key aspects of the Policy. Firstly, the Policy prioritises promoting local content, ensuring that Zimbabwean stories, perspectives, and voices are

amplified. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride among citizens, recognising that they are the builders of their country. By promoting local content, the Policy creates a media landscape that reflects the country's unique cultural, social, and political context.

Another crucial aspect of the Policy is empowering local media. By supporting local media outlets and community radio stations, the Policy enables citizens to take an active role in shaping the media landscape. This empowerment fosters a sense of responsibility among citizens, aligning with the philosophy that citizens are the primary builders of their country. The Policy also emphasises fostering media literacy, recognising the importance of critical thinking and engagement in the media landscape. By promoting media literacy programs, the Policy enables citizens to critically evaluate information, make informed decisions, and engage meaningfully with the media. This approach reflects the philosophy's emphasis on citizens' active participation in building and shaping their country. Lastly, the Policy promotes citizen participation, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard and their perspectives are considered. By encouraging citizen participation in media production, decision-making processes, and policy development, the Policy embodies the philosophy's spirit, recognising the critical role citizens play in building and shaping their country.

On the other hand, the Policy recognises the vital role media play in economic development. It acknowledges various mass communication channels, including legacy media i.e. print, radio and television; social media; and weblinks, which provide fact-based news, information, educational content, and entertainment to the public. The Policy provides a framework for achieving the national media objectives and outcomes, for promoting a media sector that serves the needs and interests of all Zimbabweans.

Notably, the Policy addresses the impact of technological innovations in the media industry, such as worker redundancy and changing dynamics. In response, the Policy aims to mitigate these challenges, particularly in legacy media, which faces issues like scarce resources, dwindling audiences and advertiser flight. By introducing measures

to address these challenges, the Zimbabwe Media Policy demonstrates its commitment to fostering a vibrant and sustainable media ecosystem that supports the country's development goals. The Policy is a forward-thinking initiative that supports the country's National Development Strategies as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Zimbabwe Media Policy aims to contribute to Zimbabwe's vision of becoming an empowered upper-middle-income economy by 2030, with a high quality of life, underpinned by a well-informed and connected citizenry.

1.4. Alignment to Laws Governing the Media Sector

The Zimbabwe Media Policy is grounded in a robust framework of national laws, regulations, and international standards. This Policy aligns with and supports the implementation of various statutes, including:

- (a) the Freedom of Information Act [*Chapter 10:33*], which promotes transparency and access to information. The Zimbabwe Media Policy upholds the principles of freedom of information, ensuring that citizens have access to accurate and timely information;
- (b) the Broadcasting Services Act [*Chapter 12:06*] and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (Commercialization) Act, 2001, which regulate the broadcasting sector. The Policy complements these laws by promoting diversity, inclusivity, and accountability in the broadcasting industry;
- (c) the Zimbabwe Media Commission Act [*Chapter 10:35*], which establishes the Zimbabwe Media Commission to regulate the media industry. The Policy supports the commission's mandate to promote media freedom, ethics, and standards; and
- (d) the Zimbabwe Electoral Act [*Chapter 2:13*], which governs electoral processes. The Policy promotes fair and balanced reporting during elections, ensuring that citizens have access to accurate information to make informed decisions.

In addition to these national laws, the Policy also aligns with regional and international standards. For instance, it complements the African Charter on Broadcasting, which promotes diversity, independence, and accountability in the broadcasting sector. Furthermore, the Policy takes into account emerging issues in the media landscape.

For example, it addresses the regulation of remotely piloted aircraft, as outlined in the Civil Aviation (Remotely Piloted Aircraft) Regulations of 2018 as provided for by Statutory Instrument 271 of 2018. The Policy also aligns with laws regulating content, such as the Censorship and Entertainments Control Act [*Chapter 10:04*], which ensures that content is suitable for public consumption. Moreover, the Policy respects intellectual property rights, as outlined in the Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act [*Chapter 20:01*], and promotes data protection, as per the Cyber and Data Protection Act [*Chapter 12:07*]. Finally, the policy complements the Postal and Telecommunications Act [*Chapter 12:05*], which regulates the postal and telecommunications sector.

In conclusion, the Zimbabwe Media Policy is anchored in a comprehensive framework that encompasses national laws, regulations, and international standards. The Policy provides a cohesive and forward-looking approach to media regulation, ensuring that Zimbabwe's media sector promotes democratic governance, economic development, and social justice.

2.0. THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1. Goal

To promote a modern, digital, pluralistic, diverse, and inclusive media landscape that reflects Zimbabwe's cultural, linguistic, and geographical diversity, and provides equal access to information and opportunities for all Zimbabweans, regardless of their background, location, or socio-economic status.

2.2. Policy Vision

A vibrant, diverse, and inclusive media sector that promotes local narrative shaping, empowers Zimbabweans to participate in national development, and advances national interests for the achievement of an upper-middle-income society by 2030.

2.3. Mission

To foster a vibrant media sector that promotes national consciousness, defends, upholds, and promotes Zimbabwe's interests and aspirations worldwide, while showcasing its rich cultural heritage.

2.4. Policy Objectives

The Policy seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- a) to unwaveringly defend Zimbabwe's image, sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- b) to nurture and instill national values, ethics and citizenship, promoting a shared understanding of Zimbabwe's history, vision, and developmental aspirations;
- c) to advance and protect Zimbabwe's national interests, promoting the country's social, economic, cultural and political well-being;
- d) to achieve a strong and converged digital media industry;
- e) to fully implement, achieve and actualize all Constitutional provisions that promote the growth and development of a vibrant, diverse media industry in Zimbabwe;
- f) to transform Zimbabwe's media landscape through the development of modern, efficient, and sustainable infrastructure;
- g) to promote professionalism and capacitate the media industry;

- h) to develop and enforce comprehensive codes of ethics, raising standards of media practices in Zimbabwe;
- i) to assert and maintain Zimbabwe's media sovereignty, ensuring the country's independence and self-determination in the production, dissemination, and regulation of media content;
- j) to foster a linguistically inclusive media landscape in Zimbabwe, where all officially recognised languages are valued, promoted, and used to reach diverse audiences and communities; and
- k) to promote media viability and sustainability.

2.5. Guiding Principles

The Zimbabwean Government is committed to creating a conducive environment for the Zimbabwe Media Policy to thrive. To achieve this, the Government will prioritise twelve principles that foster a vibrant media industry. The principles are as summarised in figure 1 below:

Guiding Principles		
National Interest and Public Good	Positive National Image and Fostering National Pride	Access to Information and Knowledge
Media Ethics and Professionalism	Regional and International Cooperation	Digital Transformation and Innovation
Adaptability and Flexibility	Participatory Governance and Stakeholder Engagement	Protection of Whistleblowers
Transparency and Accountability	Media Independence and Pluralism	Freedom of Expression and Information
Responsible and Inclusive Media Practices	Diversity, Inclusion, and Representation	

Figure 1: Guiding Principles

- 2.4.1. **National Interest and Public Good:** Prioritising the national interest and public good in media policy decisions, balancing individual rights with collective responsibilities.

- 2.4.2. **Access to Information and Knowledge:** Ensuring that all citizens have access to accurate, reliable, and timely information, as well as opportunities for media literacy and digital skills development.
- 2.4.3. **Media Independence and Pluralism:** Promoting media independence, diversity, and pluralism to ensure a wide range of voices and perspectives are represented.
- 2.4.4. **Responsible and Inclusive Media Practices:** Balancing the need for free expression and access to information with the need to protect and promote Zimbabwe's national interests, including its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and cultural heritage.
- 2.4.5. **Positive National Image and Fostering National Pride:** Promoting a positive national image and fostering national pride, recognizing the critical role that media plays in shaping public perception and national identity.
- 2.4.6. **Media Ethics and Professionalism:** Upholding high standards of media ethics, professionalism, and self-regulation, through training, capacity building, and adherence to industry codes of conduct.
- 2.4.7. **Digital Transformation and Innovation:** Embracing digital transformation and innovation in the media sector, through facilitating investments in digital infrastructure, skills development, and entrepreneurship support.
- 2.4.8. **Regional and International Cooperation:** Collaborating with regional and international partners to promote media development, share best practices, and address common challenges.
- 2.4.9. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Ensuring that the media policy framework is adaptable and flexible, to respond to emerging trends, technologies, and challenges.
- 2.4.10. **Transparency and Accountability:** Fostering transparency and accountability in Government, business, and civil society, through investigative journalism, whistleblowing protection, and access to information laws.
- 2.4.11. **Diversity, Inclusion, and Representation:** Promote diversity, inclusion, and representation in media content, ownership, and decision-making processes, to reflect Zimbabwe's diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives.

- 2.4.12. **Protection of Whistleblowers:** Ensuring the safety and security of whistleblowers, through protection mechanisms, investigations into attacks, and accountability for perpetrators.
- 2.4.13. **Freedom of Expression and Information:** Ensuring that all citizens have the right to freedom of expression and access to information, as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
- 2.4.14. **Participatory Governance and Stakeholder Engagement:** Fostering participatory governance and stakeholder engagement in media policy development, implementation, and review, to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.

3.0. STRATEGIC PILLARS AND POLICY GUIDELINES

3.1. Pillars of the Zimbabwe Media Policy and Strategic Policy Guidelines

The Zimbabwe Media Policy addresses the pressing issue of an unregulated and fragmented media landscape, which has hindered the country's progress towards economic development, social justice, and democratic governance. The absence of an integrated and comprehensive policy framework has resulted in a lack of diversity, inclusivity, as well as limited access to information, particularly for marginalised communities. Furthermore, the outdated legal framework has failed to keep pace with technological advancements, leading to a regulatory vacuum that has compromised professionalism, ethics and media freedom. The Policy addresses these challenges by promoting a vibrant, diverse, and independent media sector that serves the public interest and supports Zimbabwe's development aspirations. This necessitates the development of strategic interventions designed to stimulate sector growth and ensure the effective implementation of the Policy provisions, ultimately fostering a vibrant and resilient media sector. To address the complex issues facing the media sector, the Policy categorises the key challenges into six strategic pillars as follows:

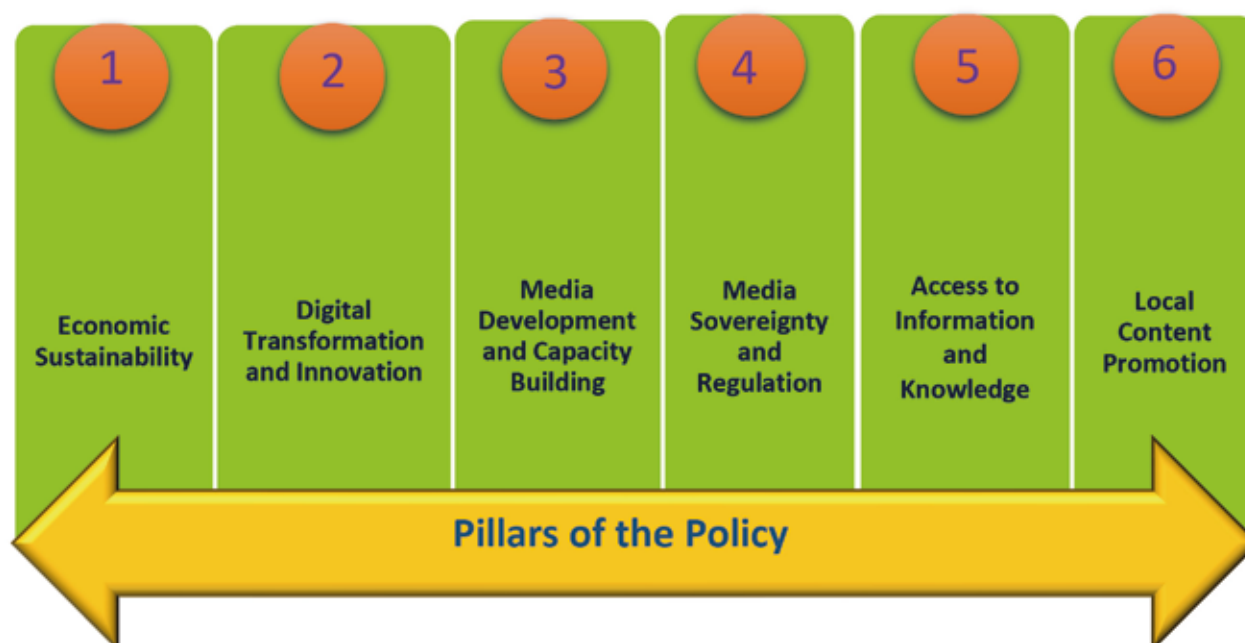


Figure 2: Pillars of the Zimbabwe Media Policy

These strategic pillars provide a comprehensive framework for the success of the Zimbabwe Media Policy, promoting a vibrant, diverse, and independent media sector that serves the public interest and contributes to the country's democratic governance, economic development, and social justice.

3.1.1. Pillar 1: Economic Sustainability:

The first pillar of the Policy addresses the pressing need to revitalise the media sector's financial stability. This is threatened by declining advertising revenues, a shift towards social media, and the struggles of print media, further exacerbated by the proliferation of free online content and newsprint shortages.

The Policy will support diversification of revenue and funding streams by the media sector. It will operationalise and broaden the objectives of the Media Fund, financed through annual levies on registered media outlets and managed by the Zimbabwe Media Commission as provided for by the Zimbabwe Media Commission Act (*Chapter 10:35*). The Policy will also support media outlets to explore alternative revenue sources beyond advertising, such as sponsored content, and events. It will facilitate partnering with the banking sector and establish funding facilities meant to support the development and growth of the media sector. The Policy shall incentivise the print and broadcasting media subsectors to transition their content creation and dissemination to digital platforms, enabling them to reach their audiences, attract advertisers, and generate revenue in the increasingly online media landscape.

The Policy will also allow donations from Zimbabwean citizens domiciled out of the country for sustainability of community radio stations and commercial advertising. It will facilitate strategic partnerships between Government, through the Ministries responsible for media, finance and Information Communication Technologies (ICT), with stakeholders in the regulation of big technological companies (Big tech) in the monetisation of content emanating from Zimbabwe for the benefit of the country's start-ups and content creators.

3.1.2. Pillar 2: Digital Transformation and Innovation:

The second pillar aims to address the media sector's digital challenges, including delayed digital migration, limited ICT expertise, high data costs, and technology access to enhance adaptability, innovation, and combat misinformation and fake news. The Policy will revolutionise the media landscape by completing the Digital Terrestrial Migration project, transitioning to digital broadcasting, and embracing emerging technologies like 5G, AI, and blockchain. To build capacity, the Policy will lead investments in training ICT professionals, focusing on emerging technologies and digital literacy. Innovative business models and partnerships will be developed to reduce data costs for community radio stations, while a co-regulation framework will be established to promote accountability and fact-based reporting on social media, weblinks, and citizen journalism. The Policy will also leverage emerging technologies to enhance content creation, distribution, and monetisation, and implement digital literacy programs to combat misinformation. Additionally, partnerships between the Government, tech companies, universities, and international organisations will drive innovation, strengthen media regulation, and promote media excellence.

3.1.3. Pillar 3: Media Development and Capacity Building:

The third pillar focuses on addressing challenges faced by community radio stations, including capacity shortages, limited funding, and lack of advertising opportunities, as well as supporting freelance content producers to tap into their commercial potential. The Policy will boost media personnel's skills through training programs focusing on business management, content creation, and technical skills. It will increase community engagement in radio stations, support freelance content producers, and modernise media laws to promote diversity and nation-building. Furthermore, it will enhance media access for marginalised communities, update copyright laws to address Artificial Intelligence use, and strengthen the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's capacity to cover national events and events of public interest.

3.1.4. Pillar 4: Media Sovereignty and Regulation:

The fourth pillar focuses on addressing media sovereignty and regulation challenges in Zimbabwe, caused by the influx of foreign publications, and aims to establish a

balanced regulatory framework that promotes media freedom and responsibility. The Policy will promote local content production, ensure local ownership and control of media outlets, and increase regulatory oversight of online broadcasting while respecting editorial independence. It will foster a free, independent, and responsible media environment, promoting national heritage and identity. The Policy will also implement measures to enhance media literacy, provide training for local journalists, and establish regulatory bodies to oversee media outlets. Furthermore, it will facilitate collaborative efforts with local media, civil society, and other stakeholders to promote media sovereignty and regulation, with regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure effectiveness.

3.1.5. Pillar 5: Access to Information and Knowledge:

The fifth pillar addresses the issue of limited access to information for marginalised communities, particularly in rural areas, and aims to bridge this gap. The Policy will promote inclusive access to information and knowledge, empowering Zimbabwean citizens to fully participate in nation-building and democratic processes. It will prioritise diverse licensing and genre issuance, promote media literacy and digital skills development through nationwide programs and training initiatives, particularly targeting marginalised communities. Additionally, the Policy will bridge the digital divide by ensuring internet services are available at information centres across rural and urban areas, and developing mobile-based information services for areas with limited internet connectivity.

3.1.6. Pillar 6: Local Content Promotion:

Lastly, the sixth pillar addresses challenges such as funding constraints, limited producer capacity, the dominance of foreign content, and an inadequate regulatory framework. To promote local content and counter foreign dominance, the Policy will maintain a 75% local content quota for all broadcasting licensees, except for specialised ones, which will have a 50% quota. The Policy also will introduce incentives for local content production, protect intellectual property rights, and enforce regulations limiting foreign content dominance. Additionally, the Policy will support

local cultural preservation, digital technology uptake, and initiatives promoting employment, information dissemination, and access to information.

3.2. Expected Media Coverage

3.2.1. Television Coverage

The anticipated television coverage footprint upon completion of the digitalisation project is expected to be comprehensive, with a significant increase in coverage area and population reach. This expanded coverage will likely have a profound impact on the media landscape, enabling more citizens to access television services and bridging the information gap between urban and rural areas. The digitalisation project holds great promise for promoting social inclusion, economic development, and democratic participation in Zimbabwe. The TV coverage will be as depicted below:

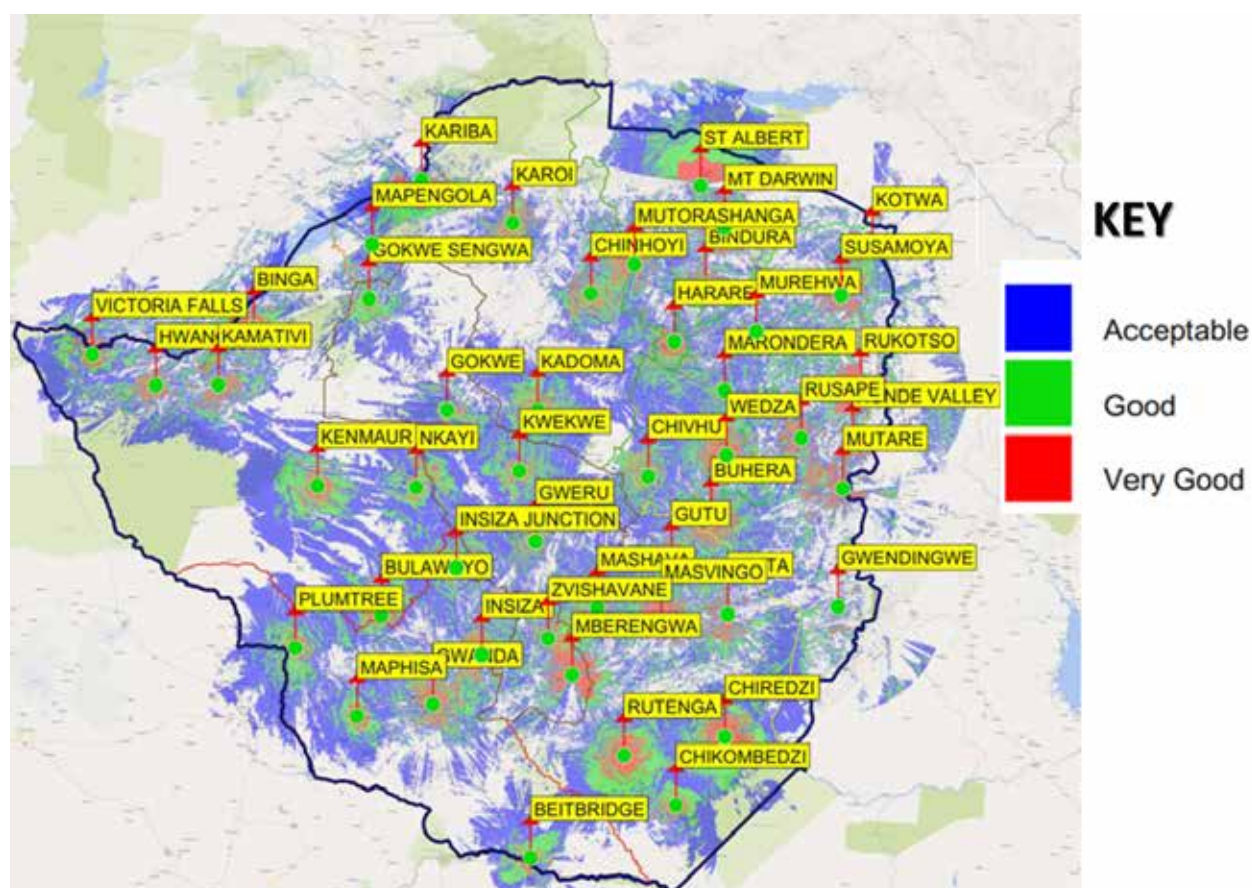


Figure 3: Expected Television Coverage

3.2.2. Radio Coverage

The successful completion of the digitalisation project is expected to significantly expand the Frequency Modulation (FM) Radio coverage footprint, enabling a wider reach and accessibility of radio services across the country. This expansion will have a profound impact on the population, particularly in rural and remote areas, where access to radio services has been limited. The digitalisation project will result in improved signal quality, reducing interference and ensuring that listeners receive clear and uninterrupted radio broadcasts. This will greatly enhance the listening experience, making radio a more reliable and enjoyable source of information and entertainment.

With the ability to reach a wider audience, radio stations will be able to provide a platform for diverse voices, perspectives, and content, promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity. This increased diversity will enrich the radio landscape, offering listeners a wider range of programming options. FM radio coverage footprint will be as is depicted in figure below:

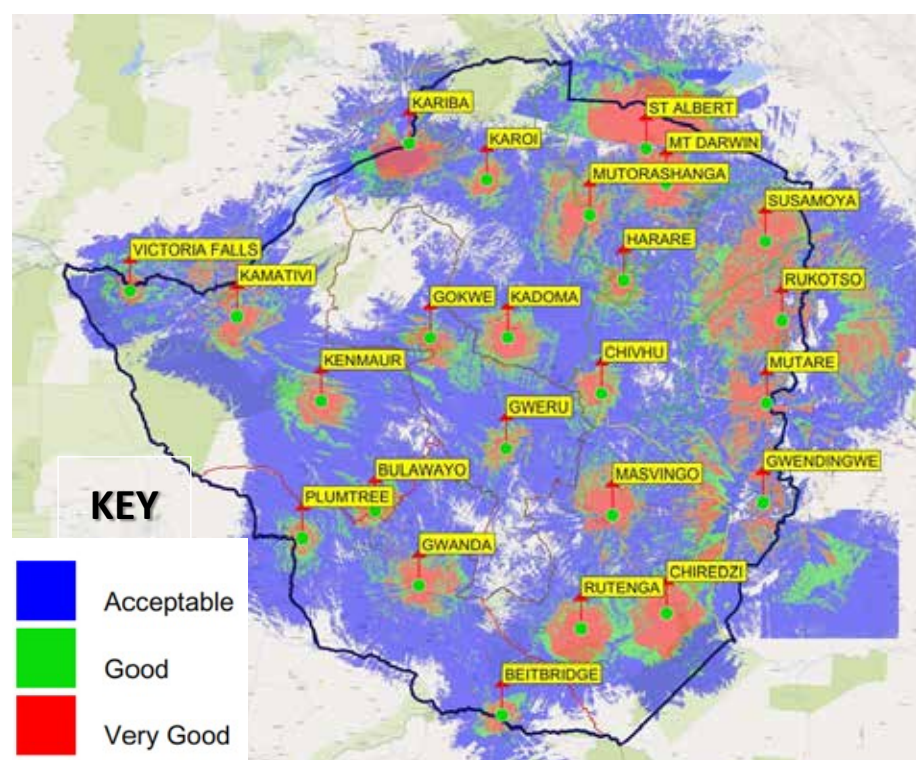


Figure 4: Expected Radio Coverage

4.0. GENERAL POLICY ISSUES

4.1. Codes of Conduct

The Zimbabwe Media Commission will work with media stakeholders to develop codes of conduct for persons employed in the media, which will promote responsible and ethical media practices. Where that cannot be achieved, the Zimbabwe Media Commission will formulate and enforce one.

4.2. Professional Conduct of Media Practitioners

The Zimbabwe Media Policy places immense importance on the professional conduct of media practitioners, recognising its significance in maintaining the integrity and credibility of the media sector. To achieve this, the Policy emphasises the need for media practitioners to adhere to a strict code of conduct that promotes ethical journalism practices. Key principles of which include respect for truth and accuracy; independence and impartiality; respect for privacy and dignity; and accountability and transparency. The Zimbabwe Media Commission Act [*Chapter 10:35*] and its associated amendments also play a crucial role in promoting professional conduct among media practitioners, providing a framework for investigations and disciplinary actions against those who violate the code of conduct.

4.3. Creation of a Media Fund

Government will establish a media fund to promote the development and upskilling of media practitioners as well as capacity building, financed through annual levies on registered media outlets. The media fund is designed to support the growth and development of the sector. Every registered media service will be required to contribute a prescribed annual levy to the fund. The collected funds will be used to support the development and upskilling of media practitioners, likely through training programs, workshops, and other capacity-building initiatives. By investing in the

growth and development of media practitioners, the fund aims to enhance the overall quality and credibility of the media landscape.

4.4. Co-regulation

Where the Zimbabwe Media Commission does not have the capacity to hear every case on wayward media and breaches of unprofessional conduct, it may delegate some of its regulatory powers. This would entail media practitioners partially regulating themselves through what is termed co-regulation.

4.5. National Employment Council for the Media Industry

A National Employment Council (NEC) for the Media Industry will be established to promote fair labour practices, improve working conditions, and enhance the overall well-being of media professionals. The Council will comprise representatives from: media employers' organizations; media workers' unions; ministries responsible for labour, and media and broadcasting services; and independent experts in labour law and media.

4.6. Quality Assurance

To enhance professionalism in the media industry, a regulatory framework will be established to ensure quality assurance of training for media practitioners. This framework will be overseen by a multi-agency committee, established by the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). The committee shall perform its functions in collaboration with bodies responsible for overseeing teaching in higher and tertiary education such as the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) and Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO), academic institutions and professional associations.

4.7. Sexual Harassment in Media Houses

To combat sexual harassment in the media industry, every media house and broadcaster in Zimbabwe is required to establish an internal Sexual Harassment Policy,

benchmarking best practices. This Policy will provide a framework for preventing, reporting, and addressing sexual harassment incidents in the workplace.

4.8. Penalties and Disincentives

The media remain a vital component of the country's democratic system; hence penalties or disincentives are there to ensure compliance with rules and standards, and to address violations. Media Regulatory authorities shall penalise media organisations and individuals that violate rules and standards. Media regulatory authorities, such as the Zimbabwe Media Commission, will play a vital role in enforcing these rules and standards. They will have the power to penalize media organizations and individuals who violate these guidelines, ensuring that the media operates within established boundaries. This aims to strike a balance between promoting free speech and responsible journalism, ultimately contributing to a healthy and functioning democracy in Zimbabwe. The penalties will be through:

- (a) loss of licenses or accreditation;
- (b) content removal or blocking;
- (c) apologies and corrections;
- (d) disqualification from Media Industry Awards; and
- (e) legal action: while co-regulation encourages resolution of disputes within its own system, media organisations and journalists can still face civil lawsuits for defamation, violations of privacy, spreading falsehoods, unauthorised use of copyright, amongst other offenses. Fines and compensations for damages shall be paid.

However, the use of penalties and disincentives for the media is by no means an attempt to criminalise the operations of Zimbabwe's media.

4.9. Converging the Disaggregated Regulatory Regimes

The Policy acknowledges the existence of multiple media regulatory platforms, including those governing telecommunications, electoral processes, ICT, and media,

which will ultimately require harmonization to ensure consistency and coherence. The reasons are as follows:

- (a) **Streamlined Regulation:** convergence eliminates redundancies and inconsistencies, creating a more efficient regulatory environment;
- (b) **Improved Clarity:** a unified regulatory framework provides clear guidelines for stakeholders, reducing confusion and facilitating compliance;
- (c) **Enhanced Cooperation:** convergence fosters collaboration among regulatory bodies, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between telecommunications, ICT, media, and electoral processes; and
- (d) **International Alignment:** by adopting international norms and best practices, Zimbabwe can ensure its regulatory framework is compatible with global standards, facilitating international cooperation and investment.

4.10. General Policy Issues Pertaining to Foreign Journalists

4.10.1. For national security considerations:

- (a) All foreign journalists who intend to report on Zimbabwe from within Zimbabwe shall have security clearances and obtain local accreditation; and
- (b) All foreign journalists intending to report on Zimbabwe from within the country must obtain clearance for their equipment prior to importing it into the country.

4.10.2. All foreign journalists and media practitioners who come to Zimbabwe for purposes of producing documentaries shall pay a prescribed fee. Those who produce documentaries based on Zimbabwe's wildlife shall leave a copy of the documentary for free.

5.0. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK OF THE POLICY

5.1. Institutional Framework

The prosperity, success, and growth of the media sector rely heavily on the collaborative and inclusive involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including strong participation of strategic Ministries such as those responsible for Information Communication Technology (ICT), Finance, and Justice. This collective engagement fosters a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for both the process and outcomes. Effective engagement during policy implementation provides a foundation for:

- a). **Meaningful policy dialogue:** encouraging open discussion and debate among stakeholders;
- b). **Collaborative review and adaptation:** fostering a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement; and
- c). **Robust partnerships and alliances:** building stronger, more diverse partnerships and strategic alliances, including those focused on regional integration and international initiatives.

5.2. Formation of Thematic Working Groups

The Zimbabwe Media Policy is built on six core strategic pillars, which will be supported by five thematic working groups. These groups will focus on specific pillars and comprise stakeholders from Government, private sector, media, and academia. The Chairpersons of the pillar-based Thematic Working Groups will be drawn from Ministries responsible for the strategic issue under each pillar, for instance, the Ministry responsible for ICT will chair the thematic working group on Digital Transformation and Innovation. The key responsibilities include appointing a steering committee to lead the implementation of pillar-specific activities; conducting a rapid stocktaking to identify tasks, responsible stakeholders, required resources, and timelines; creating a tailored implementation strategy for each pillar; and establishing a framework to monitor progress, evaluate effectiveness, and make adjustments as needed. The following are the key institutions in the implementation of the Media Policy:

- (a) Ministries responsible for Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services; Information Communication Technology (ICT); Finance; and all other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies;
- (b) the Zimbabwe Media Commission; and Transmedia;
- (c) the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe; and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation;
- (d) Media Bodies like Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ);
- (e) Education and Training Institutions; Private Media and State-owned newspapers;
- (f) media practitioners' associations and unions;
- (g) Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ); and
- (h) Parliament of Zimbabwe.

5.3. Coordination Structure

5.3.1. Media Sector Inter-Ministerial Committee (MCS-IMC)

The Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services will play a leading role in coordinating and implementing the policy, with support from the Ministry responsible for Information Communication Technologies and other line ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). The key ministries involved will form the Media Sector Inter-Ministerial Committee (MCS-IMC), a forum for:

- (a) **Policy Dialogue:** encouraging open discussion and debate among stakeholders to ensure effective policy implementation;
- (b) **Collaboration and Coordination:** fostering collaboration among MDAs to achieve policy objectives;
- (c) **Review and Evaluation:** providing a platform for reviewing and evaluating Policy progress, identifying areas for improvement, and adjusting strategies as needed;
- (d) **Shared Responsibility:** promoting a sense of shared responsibility among stakeholders for policy implementation and outcomes; and

- (e) **Mobilisation of funding:** the Committee will play a vital role in mobilizing funding for the implementation of the Policy. This will involve exploring alternative financing options to complement budget resources.

This Committee will ensure a cohesive approach to policy implementation, leveraging the expertise and resources of various ministries, departments, and agencies. In addition, regulatory bodies, such as the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) shall be strengthened and capacitated to ensure effective regulation and enforcement.

5.3.2. Media Sector Steering Committee

At the technical level, the Media Sector Steering Committee (MCS-SC) will be established to provide technical guidance and oversight for policy implementation. The MCS-SC will comprise membership from:

- (a) **Chairpersons of Thematic Working Groups:** ensuring representation from each of the six strategic pillars, providing a comprehensive perspective on policy implementation.
- (b) **Technical Experts:** including experts from government ministries, regulatory bodies, media organizations, academia, and civil society, providing specialized knowledge and skills.

The MCS-SC will serve as a forum for:

- (a) **Technical Guidance:** providing technical advice and guidance on policy implementation, ensuring that strategies are effective and efficient.
- (b) **Progress Monitoring:** tracking progress, identifying challenges, and proposing solutions to ensure policy objectives are met.
- (c) **Thematic Working Group Coordination:** facilitating coordination and collaboration among the Thematic Working Groups, ensuring a cohesive approach to policy implementation.
- (d) **Problem-Solving:** addressing technical challenges and bottlenecks, finding creative solutions to ensure policy implementation stays on track.

5.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is essential for the Zimbabwe Media Policy, ensuring effective implementation, accountability, and continuous improvement. Key components of the monitoring and evaluation system include establish clear, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators to track policy implementation progress; developing a data collection and management framework to ensure accurate, reliable, and timely data for monitoring and evaluation purposes; production of regular progress reports to stakeholders, including government ministries and regulatory bodies; and conducting mid-term and end-term evaluations to assess policy implementation effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and inform future policy decisions.

5.5. Resource Mobilisation and Funding

To ensure effective implementation of the Policy, the following measures will be taken:

- (a) **Budget Allocation:** allocate sufficient budget to support policy implementation, including funding for capacity building, training, and community outreach programs;
- (b) **Private Sector Support:** private sector support will be explored to supplement government funding, ensuring sustainable policy implementation; and
- (c) **Private Sector Engagement:** the private sector in policy implementation will be engaged, encouraging investments in digital infrastructure, media development, and capacity building programs.



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