

UZBEKISTAN

INTRODUCTION

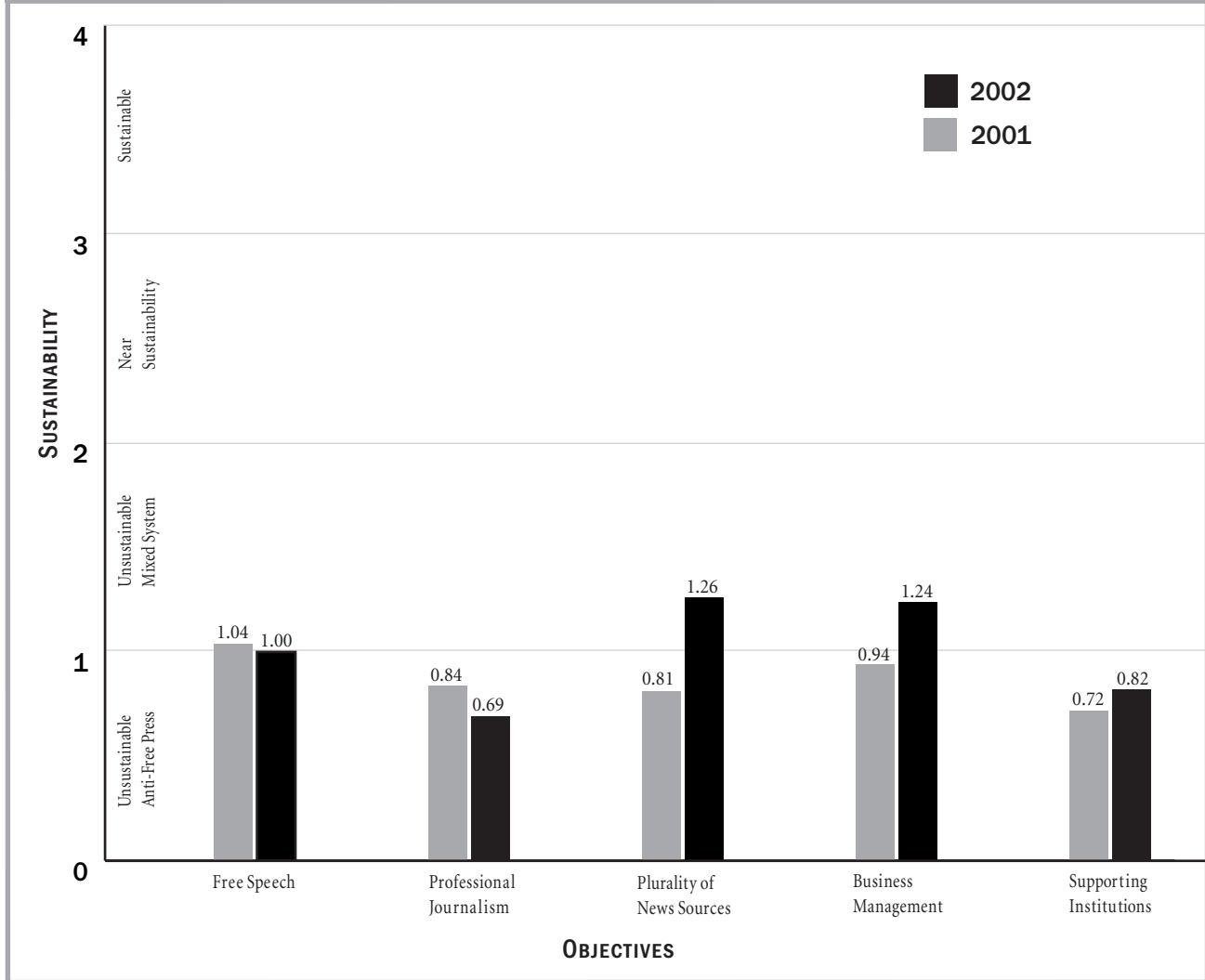
Operating in the harsh conditions of Uzbekistan, the media environment is experiencing an overall decline in standards, a deterioration of general educational and cultural resources, and an upswing in cultural and political intolerance. Therefore, Uzbekistani media are demonstrating astonishingly steadfast adherence to traditional values that are hindering the modernization of society and leading to further political and cultural isolationism. According to a panel participant, “One of the impediments to the development of openness in Uzbekistan is the strengthening of the traditional societal values which make freedom of speech practically unattainable. For example, Uzbekistani society is closed in that it is not customary to discuss problems. Many issues have been secretly tabooed.” The government may be officially pursuing elements of a liberal media policy, as far as providing a legal framework for media legislation is concerned. However, the laws are not enforced. Moreover, the authoritarianism of the regime “from above” and the conformity of the journalists “from below” make it practically impossible to freely voice thoughts and opinions.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistani media carried on many of the traditions of the Soviet media. Despite tremendous growth in the number of publishers, television channels, and radio stations, the public still does not receive varied or socially conscious reporting. Journalists’ access to information is limited because of the reticence of government bureaus and officials. Furthermore, the public is afraid to turn to the mass media to voice concerns about issues that affect their daily lives during the difficult transitional period.

According to data from the National Press Center, 507 newspapers, 157 magazines, four news agencies, and 70 electronic media outlets (television and radio) were registered at the beginning of 2002. Of the 507 papers published, 77 of them have nationwide circulation, 162 have regional circulation, 47 are distributed citywide, 176 have district circulation, and 45 are trade publications. Ninety-four are state-run papers, 63 are public, 50 are affiliated with commercial or religious groups, and 133 are attached to government offices. As for the magazines, 99 are state-owned, 34 are public, and 27 have other ownership.

Self-censorship is quickly taking the place of official censorship, a trend that stifles the journalists’ desire for the freedom of expression.

UZBEKISTAN-MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX



OBJECTIVE SCORING

The averages of all the indicators are averaged to obtain a single, overall score for each objective. Objective scores are averaged to provide an overall score for the country. IREX interprets the overall scores as follows:

3 and above: Sustainable and free independent media

2-3: Independent media approaching sustainability

1-2: Significant progress remains to be made; society or government is not fully supportive

0-1: Country meets few indicators; government and society actively oppose change

Note: The 2001 scores for the four Central Asian countries in this MSI have been modified from last year's report to more accurately reflect benchmark data compiled by IREX and USAID in 2001.

INDICATOR SCORING

Each indicator is scored using the following system:

0 = Country does not meet indicator; government or social forces may actively oppose its implementation

1 = Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator; forces may not actively oppose its implementation, but business environment may not support it and government or profession do not fully and actively support change

2 = Country has begun to meet many aspects of the indicator, but progress may be too recent to judge or still dependent on current government or political forces

3 = Country meets most aspects of the indicator; implementation of the indicator has occurred over several years and/or through changes in government, indicating likely sustainability

4 = Country meets the aspects of the indicator; implementation has remained intact over multiple changes in government, economic fluctuations, changes in public opinion, and/or changing social conventions

Printed material is published in Uzbek, Russian, Kazakh, Karakalpak, Tajik, Korean, and Hebrew. The vast majority of publications are issued in the official (Uzbek) language, which is regulated by the Law on the Official Language. The law particularly applies to media in the provincial areas, where Uzbekistanis comprise most of the population. Publications with nationwide distribution are multilingual, with editions printed in Uzbek and Russian.

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Social and political papers include the publications of governmental bodies, political parties, and public organizations (pseudo-nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]). Publications covering cultural issues like education, literature, art, and religion (two papers and one magazine) also exist. The number of economic and trade papers and magazines continues to grow.

The electronic media consist of 25 state-run television and radio stations, 45 commercial television stations, and FM radio stations. The owners of these outlets are a mix of private companies, joint ventures, and individuals. However, the public knows little about who owns the rapidly proliferating FM stations. Most of these stations are based in big cities and cover relatively small territories.

The panel participants admitted that despite the considerable number of public periodicals and the growth of commercial television and FM stations, most media outlets remain under the government’s control. Since most media owners are connected with the government to some degree, they mostly reflect the government’s viewpoint. The same holds true for the publications produced by parties and public organizations. There are no truly independent publications in Uzbekistan. As for the electronic media, broadcasts

mainly feature news taken from the Internet, most of which comes from Russian websites.

The lack of diverse news sources results in public indifference to the press. The main sources of information in rural areas are local television stations or word-of-mouth news in the bazaars. Such news provides varied, but often unverified, information. As a result, Uzbekistanis can know more about events taking place in foreign countries than the events in their own country, town, or district. Issues and problems faced by the nation are not discussed openly. Instead, such topics are internalized, thereby increasing tension among the people and giving rise to the distrust of official information. Meanwhile, the preponderance of entertainment programming that dominates electronic media often serves to annoy the audience.

The Media Sustainability Index (MSI) panelists believe that the term “independent media” does not apply to Uzbekistan. The nation has no public opinion regarding the most important events in the country. In other words, the population lacks a public conscience, so Uzbekistanis are baffled by the changes taking place in their country because they do not receive reliable media coverage.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Uzbekistan Objective Score: 1.00/4.0—In Uzbekistan, the legislative framework regulating the media and access to information is rather comprehensive and meets many aspects of international standards. The main problem is that in practice, this framework is either used ineffectively or not at all. There are a number of provisions in the media legislation that contradict each other and the republic’s Constitution. In Article 16 of the media law, the regulatory body’s authority in suspending or closing a media outlet is equal to that of the court. This clause contradicts the constitutional provision. The same problem exists in establishing a media outlet. A number of constitutional amendments allowed for tighter control of the media (such as the amendment on the accountability of media ownership). While the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, it censors media ownership and management by making the owners as responsible for the reporting as the journalists. It is noteworthy that licenses are issued to media outlets at the city (district), oblast (regional), and republic (national) levels. In other words, if media “behave themselves”—by praising

Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information.	
Free Speech Indicators	Legal/social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
	Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
	Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
	Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
	State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence.
	Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and the offended party must prove falsity and malice.
	Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
	Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
	Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

everything and everybody and covering up the problems—they can appease the authorities who grant them permission to exist. Otherwise, media are stripped of their registration.

The Interdepartmental Commission for Licensing (MKK KM Ruz) is authorized to issue (or grant permission to issue) licenses. Media do not have any taxation benefits. Although the state duties for broadcast licenses remain at a constant rate, they are too expensive for many television stations. State broadcasting channels receive their broadcasting licenses automatically. For example, Uzteleradiokompaniya is automatically given the top priority in licensing because its director is a member of the registering body (the MKK). The same favoritism holds for the print outlets, which formerly belonged to the publishers’ group controlled by the former State Committee for the Press (now the Press and Information Agency). Licenses for broadcasting are issued, but the process depends on the political situation. For example, Orbita TV in Angren was shut down for eight months in 1998 because it aired a program called “The Open Asia,” which contained some critical material about Uzbekistan.

While the civil code contains an article on libel, instances of court hearings regarding journalists

charged with libel are rare. In practice, the courts are subordinate to the authorities.

In Uzbekistan there is no law to regulate the activity of electronic media. Broadcasters are regulated by statutory acts that allow government authorities to do as they please. As a result, opportunities for accessing information are limited. Journalists who openly oppose the state’s actions risk government repression. Journalists have been beaten, media outlets have been shut down, and court judgments have been biased. Due to the latest changes in the law on media, journalists are held increasingly more liable for their work. So journalists avoid conducting in-depth investigations because of the lack of a protective legislative framework and the constant risk of being charged with libel. Journalists are frequently not allowed to publish or broadcast information on a sensitive subject, if it is deemed inappropriate by the editor or publisher. The journalists are under the control of editors, television and radio news directors, and media owners.

It is noteworthy that licenses are issued to media outlets at the city (district), oblast (regional), and republic (national) levels. In other words, if media “behave themselves”—by praising everything and everybody and covering up the problems—they can appease the authorities who grant them permission to exist. Otherwise, media are stripped of their registration.

State-run media are given priority access to information, since such outlets are accredited. However, independent correspondents often cannot obtain this same information. Independent journalists, even when accredited, cannot ask too many questions because press secretaries provide state information mainly to the state-owned media.

Prominent business leaders and politicians avoid any kind of communication with the media, but they can still interfere with the media’s work. It is difficult to obtain statistics, facts, or comments from the elites.

Many regional media lack the opportunity to use the Internet because of financial constraints. Information is publicly available on the Internet, but many people simply cannot afford access fees. When contracts with foreign television companies are secured, informational programs can be broadcast throughout Uzbekistan. International news is accessible, but the media cannot publish it in full.

Journalistic ethics are nonexistent, and a code has yet to be developed. The criminal code contains an article on libel, and government authorities use it against the media. Newspapers are often unable to defend themselves against such charges, as the prosecutors and the judges are usually biased toward the state.

The journalism profession is accessible to anyone. The state does not prohibit students from entering journalism universities. However, the competition to enroll in Russian-language programs is greater than for the Uzbek-language programs.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.69/4.0—When the media report on political events, they largely express the official view. Such reporting is based on official sources, so events regarding high-ranking officials are

not fully covered, and reliable political information does not reach readers. Access to international information is limited by the fact that there are no foreign correspondents. The media also publish or broadcast made-to-order reporting, but few commercial groups are interested in this type of coverage. Therefore, entertainment programs dominate television and radio programming. Considering that the quality of news reporting is poor, entertainment programs are increasing in popularity. Journalists do not always verify their data and sources, especially at the regional media outlets. It is very difficult to obtain information from state authorities. As a result, news coverage is subjective, and competing viewpoints are rarely included. Media outlets and journalists share one common, government-approved position.

Under these circumstances, journalists’ professional standards are very low. Even though the number of print and electronic media is growing, many of the new outlets are staffed by people from rural areas where basic education is poor. Some journalism students from rural areas admitted to having read newspapers and magazines on very rare occasions. This lack of exposure to news is partly due to the ailing library system, and partly because newspapers infrequently reach rural areas.

Corruption exists within the ranks of journalists. Many reporters write made-to-order articles, and some are forced to procure advertising information, because television stations are unable to hire special advertising agents. In many state-run media outlets, the “Soviet” code of conduct for journalists is still prevalent. Journalists do not gather opinions from competing parties when covering a number of social or political issues.

Poor resources at universities in Uzbekistan make it difficult for journalism faculties to offer good instruction. The lack of foreign-language skills (including Russian, which used to be a key source of information in the Soviet era) further handicaps journalists at every stage of their careers. In fact, many of the instructional books in Russian have been discarded over the past few years. It has become increasingly difficult to overcome traditional values in order to adopt modern, democratic ideals if the current Uzbek-language print and broadcast media are the gauge. This mindset, accompanied by the lack of educational resources, presents serious obstacles to the education of journalism students in Uzbekistan.

Self-censorship is also a problem due to the lack of legal protections for journalists. Self-censorship by journalists is intensifying as government officials

Journalism meets professional standards of quality.	
Professional Journalism Indicators	Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
	Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
	Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
	Journalists cover key events and issues.
	Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
	Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
	Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
	Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

continue to exert pressure on the media sector. News programs are subjected to censorship to the greatest extent. For example, radio station managers routinely meet with officials who handle media issues in order to learn the current political guidelines. In this case, the main censor of news broadcasting is the radio station’s management itself.

News services in Uzbekistan are hardly free to choose their own material. Non-published directives indicate which websites news services should use, with special preference given to the state-run UzA site. Similarly, some sites are restricted. Therefore, news services are forced to choose from boring official news (including the president’s travel schedule and agricultural news) and livelier international events (airplane crashes and cultural news) taken from Russian websites. According to government requirements, all leading radio stations must record transcripts from on-air programming in a special logbook.

Low salaries and the degree of dependence on the authorities force journalists to write made-to-order articles and accept bribes. Self-censorship is quickly taking the place of official censorship, a trend that stifles the journalists’ desire for the freedom of expression. Therefore, it is not a question of journalistic ethics; instead, journalists follow a traditional journalistic code. Journalists avoid controversial issues, unless there is a “request” from the authorities. For the most part, the press strives to present the official, often embellished, news.

Alternative viewpoints are impossible to publish in the local press, since repercussions would be severe. Some well-known journalists are on the payroll of the SNB (National Security Service) and the president’s office. These journalists are willing to incriminate anyone at the request of the state. Despite these obstacles, Internews tried to introduce the Code of Ethical Rules into the journalism community of Uzbekistan.

Most of the independent media in Uzbekistan have very poor technical capabilities for collecting and broadcasting information. Media outlets in the rural regions lack even the most basic equipment. However, state-run media have good technical resources, especially for television stations in the capital. These limitations make it practically impossible to produce talk shows or air live reports.

Niche reporting on specific issue areas is rarely practiced. Media generally do not report on socio-political or economic problems. The consequences of such problems, such as decreasing civil liberties, are

not reported. Meanwhile, the population is generally passive and unwilling to solve social problems. As a result, already-low living standards are deteriorating, and poverty is worsening. A considerable part of the population is operating in the “shadow economy” and has yet to demand legal protections and anti-corruption measures.

Although journalists in the capital do specialize in some areas, local media are severely understaffed and are not able to specialize at all. Economic publications enlist the services of scientists, lawyers, psychologists, and professional managers. Nevertheless, there are almost no highly qualified analysts or commentators in Uzbekistan.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Uzbekistan Objective Score: 1.26/4.0—In Uzbekistan there is hardly a diversity of public or private media. Four information agencies are in operation, but only Turkiston-Press is somewhat independent. Newspapers are required to buy news from state-run information agencies like UZA, Zhakhon, and the news agency of Karakalpakstan. Turkiston-Press disseminates its information not only through the media, but also to international organizations and embassies. The Internet has provided a vast array of new information

Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news.	
Plurality of News Sources Indicators	A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
	Citizens’ access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
	State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
	Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
	Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
	Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
	A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

sources. Government offices and NGOs have created their own websites, thereby adding to the number of information sources. However, the quality of these sites is not high. Also, the press services of ministries and state bureaus are generally unprofessional and are not reliable sources of information.

Access to local media for most rural Uzbekistanis is very difficult. Many cannot afford newspapers and magazines, much less cable television. The government restricts the distribution of papers and other publications from Russia and neighboring states. The public can buy Western publications only in hotels in big cities, but these publications are very expensive. Satellite dishes used to access Western television channels are expensive, and few Uzbekistanis have the foreign-language skills to understand Western broadcasts.

The state-run media reflect only the government perspective. As a result, these media do not serve the people. The publications produced by political parties and public organizations are hardly different from the state media, both in their content and quality. For a public that is used to difficult economic conditions and a dearth of information, many Uzbekistanis do not seek out better news sources. This trend is demonstrated by the limited number of foreign radio station listeners. The BBC is the most popular foreign station due to its broadcasts in Russian and Uzbek. The Svoboda station, also with Russian and Uzbek programs, is also popular. However, many cannot access foreign radio stations because of the short-wave transmission that is used.

Even the independent news agency Turkiston-Press reflects the state's point of view. Other independent news agencies exist, but they seldom supply any information that differs from the state-supplied information. Uzbekistanis do not know who owns media outlets, and such information is difficult to come by. All media present the same information, so ownership is almost irrelevant. The state monopoly of the media is obvious, and conglomerates are just beginning to take shape.

Independent television and radio broadcasters produce their own news programs, but such programs mostly cover local news or draw heavily from Internet news sites. There is no nationwide independent television or radio channel in Uzbekistan. The state television and radio company operates four channels, predominantly in the Uzbek language. The first channel is Uzbekistan, the second Yoshlar, the third TTV (Tashkent TV), and the last is an international channel. The content and quality of programs on these channels

are equally poor. These programs do not contain any criticism of the government, and there are practically no serious analytical programs. News programs do not feature opposing viewpoints, and all issues are discussed solely from the government's point of view.

Radio stations with sufficient funds produce news programs based on Internet news from foreign sources. Private television stations often retransmit foreign channels, as well as cable channels. A vital issue for radio stations is the volume of Russian-language broadcasting. According to unpublished guidelines, 60 percent of broadcasting should be done in Uzbek, and 40 percent in Russian. However, more people want to listen to music programs in Russian because that music is more varied and popular.

Approximately 45 private television and radio stations operate in Uzbekistan. Due to strict government control, and the fear of losing their businesses, station directors choose not to oppose the main political and business interests. For example, the closing of the private television station ALC and the radio station Moy gorod (My City) for political reasons has shown that the private media are not protected more than the state-run media.

Private FM radio stations transmit in Uzbek and Russian mainly in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and the Fergana Valley. All the radio stations differ very slightly from each other in terms of content, but most have a music and entertainment format. Due to the lack of resources, the quality of transmitted programs is very poor.

Although there are minority-language media, they do not address the issues facing their representative communities. Minority-language media are disseminated among the diasporas, but they do not cover a nationwide audience.

Only a small fraction of the population uses the Internet. An estimated 140,000 to 150,000 people use the Internet, with 90 percent of them in Tashkent. Internet access is increasing, contingent only on computer availability. The number of Internet cafés is also growing.

There is no law in Uzbekistan that governs Internet media. Everything related to information technology is regulated by several laws including the Law on Telecommunications, the Law on Information, the Law on the Radio Frequency Spectrum, and the Law on the Protection of Consumer Rights. The Cabinet of Ministers has adopted a number of normative documents related to technology and media. The essence of these

documents is that the state-run enterprise Uzpak holds a monopoly on Internet access. Consequently, the state controls data transmission and dictates its own tariff policy.

Today many print publications have their own websites. Unfortunately, these sites are updated randomly or not at all. The Internet news site Open Tribune was created specifically as a forum for local journalists to publish their materials, without subjecting their work to censorship. One hundred twenty-five websites have been registered in Uzbekistan, of which 15 belong to the media, including UzReport and Elektron-niy Vestnik (Electronic Bulletin).

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Uzbekistan Objective Score: 1.24/4.0—The decelerated pace of economic reform in Uzbekistan seriously affects the development of the media industry. Since media outlets derive most of their income from subscriptions and advertisements, poor financial conditions damage the efforts of media to become self-sustaining businesses. Income from subscriptions is limited due to the poverty of subscribers. Advertising revenue declines along with overall economic stagnation.

Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence.	
Business Management Indicators	Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
	Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
	Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
	Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
	Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
	Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
	Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

Advertising is the largest source of revenue for media in Uzbekistan. Subscription income is a secondary source. There is an established advertising market, but no common approach that includes the use of ratings, assessments, and other research. Advertising agencies exist, but their efficacy is limited due to the poor economic situation in the republic.

Printing companies are restricted on the specific materials they can print, but they are relatively independent financially. There are state-run and private graphic-arts firms, all of which are under the control of the government. Private media derive income from advertising and subscription, but specific data on such income, as well as circulation numbers, are unavailable. Since advertisers only deal with publications with circulation of at least 10,000, data for local papers are even more difficult to find. On the whole, advertising agencies support the media's advertising market. The media, in turn, promote the entertainment and commercial undertakings conducted in the country. There are private channels of media distribution, which operate with less influence from the state.

Circulation and distribution of local newspapers and other regional publications are carried out by Matbuot, which maintains a de facto monopoly. Matbuot charges up to 50 percent of the publication's cost for distribution. Other distributors need a *krysha* (organized crime patron) in order to obtain a license. The printing facilities are centralized and efficient, but under control of the printing monopoly Shark. Even though numerous private printing plants exist, they are not equipped for newspaper printing. Instead, they specialize mainly in the publishing of booklets and brochures. Private printing firms are not free to choose their own clients.

Media in Uzbekistan profit mainly from advertising receipts. Therefore, almost every large-scale newspaper has its own advertising agencies. However, the advertising market is limited; no goods, no advertising! Most businesses have no means for advertising. Furthermore, there are not enough advertising professionals to staff the requisite number of effective advertising agencies. Profits stemming from advertising amount to 90 percent of the total proceeds for publications, even though ad revenue is restricted to 40 percent of the publications' total volume. Subscription prices are high due to high production costs and taxes, not necessarily due to media managers' desire to make a lot of money.

Advertising agencies are well-established and do serve the media industry. However, they do not comply with international standards, since advertising legisla-

tion indicates that ad revenue should not exceed 40 percent of the media’s total income. Many television and radio stations resort to primitive advertising to generate profit. Such stations use mainly local announcements and greetings to bring in small fees.

Independent media do not receive any state subsidies, but outlets still operate under the influence of the authorities.

Research studies gauging the media’s popularity in Uzbekistan are conducted by the Ijtimoiy Fikr Public Opinion Center. However, many journalists consider it a pro-government organization and regard its ratings skeptically. Furthermore, the ratings are expensive and largely unaffordable for the private media. Ratable popularity polls are conducted when possible, but these surveys are not based on a sound methodology.

Market research is conducted infrequently, and it is done in a limited fashion. No publications have any data on the actual state of affairs in the media market. Since access to such information is costly, obtaining research is not realistic for many media.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.82/4.0—Associations that support independent media in Uzbekistan are extremely limited. There are no trade unions to represent journalists or broadcasters. A broadcasters’

association is still in the beginning stages of formation. The registration of independent journalistic organizations and professional organizations and NGOs is still a problem. To date, pseudo-NGOs, such as the Foundation for the Press Democratization Support and the National Press Center (and its branches in the provinces), have been registered with the government’s support. Attempts to found independent journalistic organizations have been unsuccessful. Journalists working for foreign news agencies and publications face difficulties in obtaining accreditation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Another obstacle to developing media associations is the lack of political will in supporting strong media and independent journalists. Many politicians are not interested in journalists’ covering corruption issues, the economy, finance, and political parties. Attempts to found trade unions and human-rights organizations run into resistance from the authorities. Journalistic education is linked to the journalist’s social status. Journalism students have opportunities to improve their skills, but students who can afford further education would rather use their resources on a more lucrative profession. Nevertheless, training is available for journalists.

The Ministry of Justice has suppressed attempts to establish an association of journalists, a union of independent media owners, and other independent journalistic organizations. Consequently, there is no independent group to protect the journalists’ interests. Some organizations provide pro bono legal assistance to journalists, but this help does not solve the overall problem.

The existing human-rights organizations do what they can to help the media, but they do not specialize in media work. Otherwise, the International Center for Retraining of Journalists of Uzbekistan conducts trainings for journalists in the regions on a regular basis.

The university journalism departments mostly teach journalism in a theoretical context, without much practical application. The level of professional education at the colleges and universities is low, since general educational literature and textbooks are in short supply. Recently, donor support enabled the journalism department at the National University to acquire special equipment for outfitting training studios and newspapers.

Internews is one organization that trains the employees of television and radio stations, but this is not enough. An international center for the training of

Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media.	
Supporting Institutions Indicators	Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
	Professional associations work to protect journalists’ rights.
	NGOs support free speech and independent media.
	Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
	Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
	Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.
Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.	

journalists operates with the help of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The project Chimera also provides good schooling for journalists. Nevertheless, professional journalism organizations from abroad such as these do not provide sufficient support to the independent press of Uzbekistan. The image of journalists in the country is overwhelmingly negative, as everybody knows that journalists in Uzbekistan are restricted in their ability to report openly.

Another obstacle to developing media associations is the lack of political will in supporting strong media and independent journalists.

Trade unions for media are just starting to take shape. There are two government organizations that are supposed to protect the freedom of speech and promote the rights of the media, but they are operating at a level of efficiency even lower than journalism groups in the former Soviet Union.

Uzbekistanis have the opportunity to study abroad with the help of international organizations and the Umid Foundation. However, many people do not want to work for the media, choosing instead to work at donor organizations.

PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Irismat Abdukhalikov
Uzbek Radio

Khalida Anarbayeva
Internews-Uzbekistan

Sasha Khamagayev
Tashkent International Radio

Aysulu Kourbanova
Vremya I My newspaper

Bokhodir Mousayev
Independent political scientist

Tamara Prokofyeva
Orbita TV/Radio

Inera Safargalieva
Svoboda Radio
Russian Broadcasting Service

Alisher Taksanov
Tsentral'naya Aziya I Kavkaz magazine

Mukaddas Usmanova
Aloka TV/Radio

PANEL MODERATOR

Marfua Tokhtakhodjaeva
Chairperson
Women's Resource Center, Tashkent

OBSERVERS

Mumtaz Abdurazzakova
Country Director
IREX/Uzbekistan

Dinara Mirzakarimova
USAID

Nurali Ochilov
Public Political Foundation for Support of Family
Democratization