



AFRICAN CENTRE FOR
MEDIA EXCELLENCE

CONSULTANCY ON MONITORING MEDIA COVERAGE OF 2022 ELECTIONS IN KENYA

DETAILED SCOPE OF WORK

1. Background

African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) is a Kampala-based independent media support organisation that is registered as a non-governmental organisation under the laws of Uganda. Incorporated in 2009, ACME supports that media to be more effective platforms for the provision of information on public affairs, tools for monitoring and holding official power accountable, and forums for vibrant public debate. For nearly 12 years, we have conducted mid-career training for thousands of journalists from different parts of sub-Saharan Africa. We have also delivered media literacy training for civil society and the public; conducted media monitoring and research on coverage of public affairs, including elections; ran a reporting grants scheme for journalists; recognised excellence through awards for journalists; convened public dialogues and symposia; and carried out freedom of expression advocacy.

In 2021, ACME signed a grant agreement with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to support our project, Enhancing Media Capacity for Inclusive Development (EMCID), which was already underway in Uganda. The project seeks to improve the media's capacity to offer quality coverage of public affairs that can promote responsive governance and inclusive development in East Africa.

In Kenya, where we started our project work this year, one of our major activities is to monitor how the news media cover the 2022 elections. As the OSCE has noted, given the key role the media play in elections, "any observation effort should pay significant attention to the activities of the media and their coverage of elections".¹

The media (can) play five essential roles in elections: provision of information to enable voters make informed decisions; provision of platforms for debate through allowing exchange of opinions amongst the different contending groups and citizens; acting as a watchdog for fairness during election campaigning and polling; educating the public about election processes; and providing voice to the voters.²

2. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of our proposed media monitoring project is to assess the nature of media coverage of the electoral process. Our goal is to contribute to accurate, fair, impartial and balanced coverage of the 2022 Kenyan elections. The specific objectives of the project are:

¹ OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2012). *Handbook on Media Monitoring for Election Observation Missions*. Warsaw, Poland.

² Marie-Soleil Frère (2010). *The Media and Elections in Post-Conflict Central African Countries*. Brussels: University of Brussels.

1. To monitor, document and share trends in media coverage of the 2022 general elections.
2. To monitor media compliance with election reporting standards.
3. To inspire journalists, editors and media owners to provide information that is accurate, impartial and fair.
4. To empower civil society and the public to demand adherence to professional standards in media coverage of the elections.

3. Approach and methodology

We conceive of media monitoring as a process of ‘constructive intervention’ whereby gaps in and concerns about coverage are addressed before the elections with media houses and journalists, based on electoral reporting standards that stakeholders have embraced.

We propose to benchmark the monitoring against electoral reporting standards that are generally accepted by the major stakeholders in Kenya, including media houses, regulators and other state actors, civil society, as well as the public. We believe that a number of widely accepted principles on the responsibilities and obligations of the media regarding election coverage and reporting would apply to Kenya too. Some of these would include:

- Accuracy
- Fairness
- Multiplicity and diversity of sourcing
- Corrections and the right of reply
- Focus on issues
- Equitable coverage of key candidates
- Rejection of bribery
- Independence from vested interests
- Interrogation of claims and promises by candidates and parties
- Rejection of hate speech

We propose to monitor mainstream news media platforms, including newspapers such as *The Nation*, *Standard*, *Taifa*, *The Star* and television stations including Citizen TV, KTN, NTV Kenya and KBC. We also propose to monitor selected radio stations in each of the political regions based on purposive sampling.

Some of the questions that the monitoring will address will include the following:

- What election-related topics do media reports cover?
- What is the frequency of election coverage in the media?
- What is the type of reports [news, commentary/opinion, features/special reports, etc]?
- What is the nature of the reporting [conventional, interpretative, investigative]?
- Who are the sources in media coverage [ordinary citizens, party officials, candidates, regulators, civil society actors, diplomats, religious leaders, central government officials, local leaders, police/security officials, etc]?
- What is the gender of the sources? Are women represented as candidates or voters?
- Which political parties are focused on in media coverage?
- Which presidential candidates are focused on in media coverage?

- How much time or space is dedicated to each presidential candidate?
- Is the reporting fair and impartial?
- What is the tone of coverage? How are the presidential candidates presented (positive, negative or neutral rating)?
- How often do news stories interrogate candidate or party promises?

These and other relevant pieces of information will be coded for each edition of the newspapers and radio and television stations that will be sampled. A standard coding scheme will be employed. It will outline the aspects on which monitoring information is needed and how that information is to be captured. Coders will be instructed to select an appropriate digit – known as a code – that will be entered on the coding form, which will be the primary data collection instrument. Coders will undergo training before they embark on coding. A sample of media content will be coded under a pilot to ensure that the measures and definitions are reliable before the full-scale coding starts.

The content analysis will provide a detailed and multi-faceted picture of the nature and extent of election coverage in the media as measured on various journalistic and content dimensions. Stories will be coded on a number of variables ranging from those that deal with the manifest or formal characteristics of stories (e.g. author, topic, length, illustrations, prominence, placement) to those that deal with the latent or structural characteristics of the news narrative (e.g. tone, source of information, main agent, event, context). The unit of analysis will be the story and each story will be treated as a whole unit of meaning. For radio and television, the programme (e.g. talk show) will also form a unit of analysis. The data will be gathered using a standard coding form, which will be administered by trained coders. A detailed codebook will contain definitions of all the content categories that will be monitored. The coding procedure will involve a rigorous and methodical process of identifying and analyzing election-related stories. The data will be captured, processed, and analysed using SPSS.

Informant interviews will be conducted to support qualitative analysis and also provide context for the quantitative findings.

Monitoring reports will be released every month at public convenings jointly hosted with Kenyan stakeholders. A final report will be released after the elections.

4. The assignment

ACME now seeks a consultant/lead researcher to take a lead on the monitoring project.

5. Terms of Reference

Specifically, the project consultant/lead researcher shall work closely with the ACME research team on the following activities:

- i. Develop and refine the media monitoring design (research tool);
- ii. Participate in the training of coders;
- iii. Oversee quality control over the output of coders and the whole monitoring project;
- iv. Provide the preliminary analysis of the monitoring findings;
- v. Participate in the review of media monitoring reports, ensuring they conform to best practice;
- vi. Write/edit the media monitoring reports;

- vii. Attend the monthly meeting of ACME's partners to discuss the monitoring findings before they are released to the public;
- viii. Participate in dissemination meetings;

- ix. Perform any related responsibilities necessary for the successful implementation of the media monitoring project.

6. Expertise Required

The project consultant/lead researcher must possess professional experience of working in the mass media sector as well as academic qualifications in journalism and mass communication.

In addition, the consultant should possess some or all the following:

- A graduate degree in journalism, mass communication or media-related field.
- Notable experience in conducting media research.
- A deep understanding of the Kenyan/East African media sector and sociopolitical context.

7. Compensation

We have estimated that the consultant will require no more than 10 person days each month.

8. Expression of interest

Qualified consultants should submit to mwesige@acme-ug.org an expression of interest detailing their understanding of the assignment and how they will go about, as well as their daily rate and expected person days to be spent per month.