

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on  
Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

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July 2005

INDEPENDENT  
MEDIA  
DEVELOPMENT  
ABROAD

Challenges Exist in  
Implementing U.S.  
Efforts and Measuring  
Results



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# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-05-803](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

Independent media development led by the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supports the national security goal of developing sustainable democracies around the world. Independent media institutions play a role in supporting commerce, improving public health efforts, reducing corruption, and providing civic education. According to the Freedom House's Freedom of the Press 2005 survey, despite important gains in some countries, the overall level of press freedom worldwide continued to worsen in 2004.

GAO was asked to examine (1) U.S. government funding for independent media development overseas; (2) the extent to which U.S. agencies measure performance toward achieving results; and (3) the challenges the United States faces in achieving results.

The Department of State generally concurred with our report and USAID offered technical comments that were incorporated, as appropriate. In addition, State indicated that it plans to develop additional performance indicators and promote best practices in the future.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-803](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-803).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4268 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov).

## INDEPENDENT MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ABROAD

### Challenges Exist in Implementing U.S. Efforts and Measuring Results

#### What GAO Found

The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development obligated at least \$40 million in fiscal year 2004 for the development of independent media, including activities such as journalism and business management training and support for legal and regulatory frameworks. About 60 percent of the fiscal year 2004 USAID and State obligations we identified supported independent media development projects in Europe and Eurasia. However, precise funding levels are difficult to identify due to a lack of agencywide budget codes to track media development obligations, differing definitions of independent media development, and complex funding patterns.

State and USAID face challenges in designing performance indicators and accurately measuring and reporting results directly tied to the performance of U.S. independent media efforts. The tools most frequently used by State and USAID as performance indicators—Freedom House's Freedom of the Press survey and the IREX Media Sustainability Index—are useful for determining the status of the media in selected countries but are of limited utility in measuring the specific contributions of U.S.-sponsored programs and activities toward developing independent media in countries when used alone.

Several country-specific and programmatic challenges can impede the implementation of media development efforts, including a changing political condition, sustainability of local media outlets, and coordination between donors and providers. Specifically, a country's changing political condition or lack of adequate civic and legal institutions can create challenges for a mission to plan, implement, and measure the results of its efforts. The sustainability of program recipients can also impede the overall success of efforts or specific activities at the country level. In addition, when coordination of activities is unstructured or informal, redundancies and confusion of responsibilities can impact project implementation.

#### U.S. Independent Media Development Journalism Training Program in Ukraine



Source: GAO.

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**Abbreviations**

BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DG	Office of Democracy and Governance
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
E&E	Bureau for Europe and Eurasia
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
EUR/ACE	Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia
FSA	Freedom Support Act
ICFJ	International Center for Journalists
IIP	Bureau of International Information Programs
IP	implementing partner
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
MDF	Media Development Fund
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MSI	Media Sustainability Index
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OMFU	Open Media Fund for Ukraine
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
RAK	Bosnian Communications Regulatory Agency
SEED	Support for East European Democracy Act of 1989
State	U.S. Department of State
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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United States Government Accountability Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

July 29, 2005

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

U.S.-sponsored independent media development efforts support the national security goal of developing sustainable democracies around the world, while complementing U.S. public diplomacy efforts by encouraging the development of sustainable media outlets with responsible and professional reporting standards and editorial practices. Independent media development projects include such activities as direct financial assistance to media outlets, journalism and business management training, and support for developing the legal and regulatory frameworks necessary for a free and open press. Beyond serving as a source of information, independent media institutions can play a role in supporting commerce, improving the effectiveness of public health efforts, reducing corruption, improving citizen access to information, and providing civic education.<sup>1</sup> However, despite important gains in some countries, like Ukraine, the overall level of press freedom worldwide continued to worsen in 2004, continuing a 3-year decline.<sup>2</sup> The declining level of press freedom has been illustrated, for example, by cases of journalists being censored, tortured, imprisoned, and murdered in response to published news reports about their government.

The Department of State (State) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are primarily responsible for U.S. government media development funding and activities. At your request, this report examines: (1) U.S. government funding for independent media development overseas, (2) the extent to which U.S. agencies measure performance toward achieving results, and (3) the challenges the United States faces in achieving results.

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<sup>1</sup>World Bank, *World Development Report 2002: Building Institutions for Markets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>As measured by Freedom House's global average score from the Freedom of the Press 2005 survey.

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To accomplish our objectives, we reviewed documentation and spoke with officials from State, USAID, and their primary partners, including the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG),<sup>3</sup> National Endowment for Democracy (NED), International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), Internews, Eurasia Foundation, International Center for Journalists, and The Asia Foundation.<sup>4</sup> In addition to audit work performed in the United States, we traveled to and reviewed documentation on U.S.-sponsored independent media development projects in Croatia, Ukraine, and Indonesia. We also sent questions to posts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, and Mali. Our analysis of key challenges included a review of several recent studies covering independent media development. Appendix I provides a more detailed description of our scope and methodology. We conducted our evaluation in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards from June 2004 to July 2005.

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## Results in Brief

State and USAID together obligated at least \$40 million in fiscal year 2004 for the development of independent media, with USAID providing the largest share. The majority—about 60 percent—of the fiscal year 2004 USAID and State obligations we identified supported independent media development projects in Europe and Eurasia. Precise funding levels for independent media development activities in countries overseas are difficult to identify due to a lack of agencywide budget codes to track media development obligations, differing definitions of independent media development, and complex funding patterns.

State and USAID have a variety of independent media development efforts under way; however, in some cases, they face challenges in designating performance indicators and in accurately measuring and reporting results directly tied to the performance of U.S. efforts. State supports media efforts under the broader context of public diplomacy or democracy building and has not widely established specific independent media development performance indicators for overseas missions or for specific media projects or activities at posts we reviewed; anecdotal examples,

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<sup>3</sup>Due to its limited efforts, we did not examine the BBG's media development programs.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Defense media activities, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, were not included in the scope of our work, as its primary focus for independent media is psychological operations and postconflict media reconstruction.

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rather than quantifiable measures, are frequently used to demonstrate success. USAID more frequently established performance measures for its missions and individual media development projects. Examples of performance indicators used for USAID missions we visited and reviewed included the audience share of media outlets, the sustainability of those outlets, the number of journalists trained, and the quality of programming developed. We also found that the tools most widely used by State and USAID as performance indicators—Freedom House’s Freedom of the Press survey and the IREX Media Sustainability Index—are useful for measuring the state of the media in countries but they are of limited utility in measuring the specific contributions of U.S.-sponsored projects toward developing independent media in countries when used alone.

Several country-specific and programmatic challenges can impede the implementation of media development efforts. Foremost, a nation’s changing political condition or lack of adequate civic and legal institutions can impact a mission’s ability to plan and implement its media activities and measure the results of its efforts. The sustainability of project recipients can also impede the overall success of projects or specific activities at the country level. For example, in Croatia, a U.S.-sponsored national television network, which linked several local stations’ news programs together to compete with the state media’s nationwide newscasts, is struggling to survive in part because the network did not develop the advertising revenue and profit-sharing structures necessary to sustain it. In addition, when coordination of activities is unstructured or informal, redundancies and confusion can impact efforts. For example, due to a lack of coordination between various agency officials in Washington, D.C., and in Indonesia, two nongovernmental organizations (NGO), one funded by State and the other by USAID, each received funds to rebuild some of the same radio stations destroyed during the recent Indian Ocean tsunami. While USAID has taken actions to improve coordination, funding for regional conferences and program evaluations is limited.

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## Background

The United States has, for many years, funded various agencies’ educational, visitor, and democracy-assistance programs that promote democratic ideals, including freedom of the press. Although considered a fundamental human right by many, freedom of the press remains unrealized in many parts of the world, particularly in countries governed by repressive regimes. Journalists continue to be censored, tortured, imprisoned, and murdered for publishing articles or broadcasting information about their government. Media assistance emerged as a significant aspect of



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development work in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly following the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. Media development aid has evolved from relatively modest activities with minor donations of equipment and training tours for journalists to, in some cases, long-term, multifaceted projects with millions of dollars invested over the life of the project.

Independent media development efforts are not clearly defined, but are commonly understood to include activities such as

- training<sup>5</sup> or educating local or indigenous reporters and editors on subjects such as media ethics, professionalism, accountability, investigative journalism, media business management and marketing, strategies for transforming state broadcasters into public service networks, and legal defense or legal regulatory issues;
- developing media or press centers;
- developing journalism schools and curriculum;
- ensuring the financial sustainability and independence of media outlets, through loan programs, advertising development, grants for commodities, and other means;
- supplying equipment or helping to build infrastructure needed to ensure media independence, including technical capacity;
- developing professional journalist, publisher, or broadcast associations;
- developing networks of independent media, such as sharing arrangements, which link production, distribution, and management of material;
- supporting the establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks and advocacy groups that protect freedom of the press;
- promoting an understanding of professional media practices and the role of free and independent media in society; and

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<sup>5</sup>Includes activities such as in-country training, third-country training, long-term study, training of trainers, and in-country residencies by expatriate experts.

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- engaging diplomatically to advance the development of press freedoms or media-related institutions, laws, and regulatory frameworks.

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## A Number of Agencies and Organizations Implement or Fund a Range of Media Development Efforts

The Department of State and USAID are primarily responsible for funding and overseeing U.S. media development projects and activities. State and USAID do not have separate global or agency-specific independent media development strategies and goals; rather, State and USAID often consider independent media development part of broader agency goals. State's independent media development efforts are generally used as tools within broader public diplomacy and democracy building efforts.<sup>6</sup> USAID's independent media development efforts are generally designed to promote the development of civil society and increase citizen access to information.

A commonly agreed upon definition of independent media development programs does not exist among State, USAID, and other donors. Rather, a variety of U.S. projects and activities support independent media in various countries overseas through individual contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements with NGO partners, or through other established U.S. programs, such as exchange programs administered by embassy public affairs sections. In addition, donors frequently use different approaches for developing independent media. For example, State offers training opportunities to a select number of individuals in the media sector or offers small grants to organizations for media development. NED provides small, short-term grants to media or advocacy organizations in many countries. In contrast, USAID has developed a more comprehensive, multiyear, multiproject approach to developing independent media in many countries that addresses the training and education of journalists, financial sustainability of local organizations, and development of the supporting legal and regulatory frameworks.

Five primary U.S. nongovernmental organizations—IREX, Internews, the International Center for Journalists, Eurasia Foundation, and The Asia Foundation—assist U.S. donors by implementing media development projects and offering funding or programmatic activities to local media

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<sup>6</sup>One senior State official told us there is currently no separate interagency strategy guiding U.S. democracy assistance programs. Moreover, as identified in our recent GAO report on public diplomacy, no U.S. strategic communications strategy currently exists to guide agency public diplomacy efforts. See GAO, *Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communication Strategy*, [GAO-05-323](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 4, 2005).

organizations. In addition, due to political sensitivities in the region, USAID has awarded contracts to private organizations for media development projects in the Middle East. Examples of possible independent media development recipients include media outlets, media organizations, and local nongovernmental organizations; professional associations; journalism schools or universities; and policymakers. In addition, there are several international organizations that support media development. (See app. II). See table 1 for a description of the roles of each bureau or office at State and USAID and select U.S. NGOs in independent media development.

**Table 1: Bureaus or Offices at State and USAID and Select U.S. NGOs and Their Roles in Independent Media Development**

Donor	Department of State	Roles
	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)	Funds and administers projects that develop legal and regulatory frameworks in support of free and independent media in countries with a history of government-run media. Provides a number of democracy-building grants for specific media development activities or to support specific media outlets.
	Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia (EUR/ACE)	Provides funding and oversight for Freedom Support Act (FSA) and Support for East European Democracy (SEED) funds allocated to embassy's public affairs sections and USAID for journalism training and other media development activities.
	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)	Funds, oversees, and administers select grants for programs that foster mutual understanding between the United States and other countries, including international educational and citizen exchange media development efforts that promote personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad.
	Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP)	Funds, oversees, and provides select support to Speaker/Specialist and Professional-in-Residence programs, which develop international understanding of professional media practices in democratic societies, as well as of the importance of press freedom and of developing knowledge of media-related institutions, laws, and regulatory frameworks.

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Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)	Supports efforts to promote free uncensored press in the Middle East by funding, overseeing, and administering grants for projects that improve the quality of reporting, train journalists, and support the growth of independent self-regulating sectors of media sustainability.
U.S. embassy public affairs sections	Responsible for coordinating, overseeing, and administering select grants for State's independent media efforts at U.S. missions overseas. Efforts, including academic and citizen exchange programs, speakers programs, international visitors programs, and book translations, are designed to improve the professionalism of the media, while at the same time increasing mutual understanding among citizens.
Regional bureaus	Oversee U.S. embassy public affairs sections' media efforts in each region, including the Middle East Partnership Initiative media activities.

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**USAID**

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Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)	Manages programs in fragile states by strengthening democratic systems, nongovernmental organizations, and other elements of civil society. Both the Office of Democracy and Governance and the Office of Transition Initiatives oversee media development projects.
• Office of Democracy and Governance (DG)	Coordinates and administers grants for long-term independent media development efforts overseas and works to strengthen commitment to an independent and politically active civil society in developing countries. The range of groups receiving USAID Democracy and Governance assistance includes coalitions of professional associations, civic education groups, women's rights organizations, business and labor federations, media groups, bar associations, environmental activist groups, and human rights monitoring organizations.
• Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)	Primarily responsible for coordinating and administering grants for USAID short-term media development efforts. Designed to provide fast, flexible assistance in response to rapidly changing conditions on the ground, such as in postconflict situations.
Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E)	Oversees and coordinates USAID independent media development country efforts and administers grants for regional media projects in Europe and Eurasia.

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USAID Overseas Missions	Funds and administers comprehensive or targeted independent media development efforts at the country level with program design and technical support provided by various USAID bureaus.
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**NED**

National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	Funds and oversees in-country subgrants that promote freedom of information, human rights, electronic communication, nontraditional communication, media monitoring, and media law reform through local, grassroots organizations.
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**Providers**

**U.S. nongovernmental organizations**

**Roles**

Eurasia Foundation	Funds and oversees subgrants and provides technical assistance to grassroots organizations that promote civil society, including media development in 12 countries of the former Soviet Union.
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Internews	Supports open media worldwide by implementing State and USAID grants and cooperative agreements to foster independent media in emerging democracies and training journalists and station managers in the standards and practices of professional journalism.
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International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)	Implement State and USAID grants and cooperative agreements that focus on (1) professionalism in reporting or journalism training, (2) democratic media legislation, (3) support for local media associations, and (4) media business management for sustainability.
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International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)	Provides global training programs and resources for journalists with 30 percent USAID funding and 70 percent private donor funding. ICFJ's workshops cover reporting, editing, production, ethics, and business management.
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The Asia Foundation	Supports the development of an open Asia-Pacific region by providing funding to local organizations for programs that help improve governance and law, economic reform and development, and international relations. Provides subgrants to directly assist media in areas such as management training, regulatory analysis, equipment supply, media ethics, direct technical assistance, media law and regulatory reform, and networking.
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Sources: State, USAID, and U.S. NGOs.

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## U.S.-Sponsored Media Development Funding Levels Difficult to Determine

Our analysis of available documents revealed that together, State and USAID obligated at least \$40 million in fiscal year 2004 to support a number of independent media development efforts. According to State, it obligated approximately \$14 million for media development projects for fiscal year 2004.<sup>7</sup> State also transferred more than \$700,000 to the BBG<sup>8</sup> for fiscal year 2004 independent media development obligations. USAID was not able to provide global budget obligations figures for its 2004 support of independent media. However, we calculated that USAID obligated at least \$25.6 million in fiscal year 2004.<sup>9</sup> USAID's largest independent media contractors—Internews and IREX—received fiscal year 2004 obligations of \$14.1 million and \$11.3 million, respectively. In addition, the Asia Foundation identified that it received \$175,000 in fiscal year 2004 obligations provided by USAID. Although we were not able to confirm these figures, USAID officials told us that they obligated an average of \$33 million per year for independent media development efforts since 1991 in amounts ranging from approximately \$13 million in fiscal year 1992 to \$61 million in fiscal year 1999.

We found that the largest portion of the State and USAID fiscal year 2004 obligations for independent media development—about 60 percent of all the agency obligations we could identify—funded efforts in Europe and Eurasia. The Middle East, which has the lowest level of press freedom, according to Freedom House's 2005 Press Freedom survey, received only about 2 percent of the total fiscal year 2004 obligations we could identify. Agency officials said that the larger funding levels for Europe and Eurasia are attributable to the democracy assistance funding provided through the Freedom Support Act and the Support for East European Democracy Act

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<sup>7</sup>State department officials provided us these figures directly after requesting information from relevant bureaus and posts regarding their 2004 obligations for independent media.

<sup>8</sup>The BBG has an interagency agreement with USAID through which it receives an interagency transfer from State's Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia to support a limited number of media training programs.

<sup>9</sup>We were not able to compile global fiscal year 2004 obligations using initial budget records USAID provided because we determined that they were not sufficiently reliable due to insufficient or inconsistent media activity coding and lack of updated global data for the fiscal year. We subsequently obtained documentation or records on fiscal year 2004 obligations made by USAID from the main NGO providers that receive independent media development grants from USAID headquarters, including the International Center for Journalists, IREX, The Asia Foundation, and Internews. For more information on how these figures were developed and data limitations, see appendix I.

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of 1989<sup>10</sup> and the high priority given to independent media development projects by the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. According to State officials, independent media development funding levels for the Middle East are expected to increase in the future due to an expansion of efforts through the Middle East Partnership Initiative. In addition, USAID officials said they expect that USAID will provide up to four times the amount of media development funding to individual countries in the Middle East in the near future—with the U.S. Mission in Egypt already in the process of launching a \$15 million media project. Officials at one mission in Central Europe expressed concern that such a funding shift could be detrimental to the ultimate success of media development efforts in European countries that have fragile and changing media environments.

Due to a variety of factors, it is difficult to accurately determine U.S. funding obligations for independent media development efforts. USAID media development funding is difficult to track globally over time because the agency has not implemented consistent agencywide budget codes to document its obligations for cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts for independent media projects and activities.<sup>11</sup> Rather, USAID's financial systems are designed to collect obligation information at the higher strategic objective level, where, we were told by USAID officials, there are inconsistencies in coding independent media activities because definitions for budget codes and strategic objectives have changed over the years. However, USAID officials told us they are currently in the process of developing systems to better track agencywide obligations data for individual program components under each strategic objective, including for independent media development efforts. State Department funding is also difficult to track because State does not keep systematic records or budget codes of its obligations at the level of independent media development activities and posts consider varying activities to embody independent media development. Finally, complex donor funding arrangements, including in some cases multiple project implementers and subgrantees, can obscure funding relationships and make it difficult to

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<sup>10</sup>See Public Law 102-511 and Public Law 101-179, respectively.

<sup>11</sup>USAID officials told us that individual missions currently track spending for various program components, including media development; however, because independent media projects can often be defined differently or be intermixed within broader civil society projects, all missions may not be recording media spending in the same manner.

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accurately determine the overall level of U.S. financial support, as well as the number of specific efforts provided in individual countries.

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## Independent Media Development Performance Measurement Efforts Complicated by a Variety of Factors

State and USAID have a variety of independent media development efforts under way. State has not widely established specific independent media development performance indicators for the overseas missions we reviewed or for specific media projects or activities sponsored by its embassy public affairs sections. USAID frequently established specific independent media development performance indicators for its missions and for specific independent media development projects we reviewed. Both agencies commonly used the IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) and Freedom House's Press Freedom surveys to measure performance—where indicators were established; however, our analysis found these indexes to be of limited utility in measuring the contributions of specific media activities, or the efforts of entire missions toward developing independent media in particular countries, when used alone.

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## State and USAID Sponsor a Number of Media Efforts

State and USAID support a wide range of media projects and activities, from training journalists to supporting media law reform. In the countries we visited—Croatia, Ukraine, and Indonesia—we spoke with several individuals who said that they had benefited from U.S. government media support. For example, we met with members of a consortium of five local NGOs advocating passage of Indonesia's Freedom of Information Act and working with the Parliament to get it placed on the agenda. In Croatia, we visited a U.S.-funded national association of journalists whose mission is to raise the professional standards of its 2,000 members. In Ukraine, we met with individuals of a U.S.-sponsored organization that has provided 220 training programs, in subjects ranging from technical production to media management, to over 2,800 media professionals. We also spoke with a number of journalists in all three countries who had visited television, radio, and newspaper operations throughout the United States as part of embassy exchange programs. See table 2 for a description of current U.S. independent media development efforts and priorities in countries we selected for in-depth analysis.



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**Table 2: U.S. Independent Media Development Priorities for Select Countries**

<b>Case study country</b>	<b>Independent media development priorities</b>
Croatia	Promote independent media through exchange and training programs to expose Croatian journalists and editors to U.S. practices.
Ukraine	Employ bilateral engagements, including sustained high-level demarches, in support of a free press, access to information, and journalists' rights to freely exercise their profession; coordinate with the EU and G-7 and other key countries, donors, and institutions on matters including assistance and policy; support grassroots media initiatives such as expansion of Internet access by regional media, substantive newspaper supplements, and TV documentaries through embassy, USAID, NGO, and foundation projects; provide technical assistance for projects that strengthen independent media and increase the availability of quality news, journalist advocacy, financial viability, and managerial capacity of independent media; finance legal assistance for journalists and media outlets; improve the legal and regulatory frameworks for media, including access to information, laws protecting free speech, and fair professional practices for media; foster the growth of NGOs that promote media freedom.
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Assist viable private sector broadcast and print media to provide a broad range of objective programming; provide technical assistance and political support to Bosnian Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK), Press Council, Association of Electronic Media, journalist associations, and media training providers; support domestic production.
Kyrgyzstan	Work with government officials to press for reform of media and libel laws and to reduce pressure against independent media; support independent media through programs to provide independent printing facilities, legal counsel, institutional support to journalists' associations, and training in new media technology; support journalists' professional associations and their capacity to monitor and document press freedom infringements and advocate on these issues with the government; monitor violations of press freedom and report on policy and trends affecting media; teach objective journalism and management skills to increase media outlets' professional and economic viability; support programs that encourage political dialogue and debate, such as discussion clubs and TV/radio talk shows, and ensure that remote areas also have access to such programs; increase the accessibility to diverse forms of information about political, economic, and social issues for all citizens throughout the country; support spread of Internet access throughout the country.
Haiti	Strengthen the independent press; strengthen media independence and community radio networks; increase citizen awareness of their rights and responsibilities to the extent that citizens apply this knowledge in everyday experiences; strengthen journalists' ability to report on issues related to democratic development and to advocate for greater freedom of the press.
Georgia	Foster the development of an increasingly vibrant civil society; assist in building a vibrant and diverse civil society, including political parties, independent and responsible media, and constituency-based NGO coalitions, to advocate for reforms in Georgia and to partner with the new government in carrying out key reforms; increase journalistic professionalism through U.S. and locally based assistance for print and broadcast media.
Egypt	Initiate new projects to support journalism training on free, fair, and accurate reporting through both classroom work and internships with U.S. news media.
Indonesia	Professionalize media through exchange and training programs; U.S. Fulbright lecturers, students and researchers outreach on the topic of free and responsible media; provide Small Democracy Grants to bolster free and independent media.

Source: State Department.

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## Performance Indicators for State's Independent Media Development Efforts Not Widely Established

While State's independent media activities conducted at overseas missions support U.S. objectives in these countries, performance indicators were not widely established for the activities, making it difficult for State to accurately measure and report their value. At four of the nine countries we reviewed, State had developed some media-related performance indicators to measure the overall results of the missions' independent media development efforts. For instance, for Kyrgyzstan, State currently measures the results of the embassy's efforts in developing independent media and improving the availability of political information in several ways, including by surveying whether editors and journalists that receive support become more skilled in reporting and editing political news. However, aside from counting the number of participants, specific performance indicators for individual embassy-sponsored independent media projects or activities were not widely established in the cases we reviewed. For example, embassy officials in Croatia said there were no measurable performance indicators tracked for their journalism exchanges and other media-related public diplomacy efforts.

Several State Department officials told us that posts rely heavily on their knowledge of the activities and anecdotal reports of accomplishments to evaluate performance. In some instances, embassy public affairs sections submit reporting cables to State Department bureaus and offices or enter descriptions of media projects or activities and anecdotal information into a database managed by the Bureau of International Information Programs. State's Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) bureau has, in some cases, used quantifiable indicators, including the number of local radio stations that broadcast sponsored programs or the number of articles written as a result of journalist training seminars, to measure the performance of independent media projects related to democracy assistance, in addition to gathering descriptive or anecdotal information on accomplishments.

State officials told us that embassies are more likely to develop independent media-specific performance indicators for evaluating results when independent media is a priority at the post and specific performance goals are set in mission-planning documents.<sup>12</sup> For example, the current

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<sup>12</sup>Media development efforts are frequently designated by the mission as a tactic or strategy for accomplishing broader performance goals related to Democracy and Human Rights or Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. See table 6 in appendix III for related goals and strategies for our case study countries.

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mission plan for Kyrgyzstan includes a stated goal of helping to build independent media that reports objectively and freely. Officials also said that posts are not currently required to develop specific indicators for individual public diplomacy projects and activities; however, a requirement for the establishment of such measures is currently being considered. Additionally, officials in State's Middle East Partnership Initiative office told us the office plans to develop measures for the effectiveness of its new media assistance project in the Middle East, but could not provide details because the initiative is still being designed. State officials we spoke with told us it is difficult to develop performance indicators with limited staff and funding, as well as the inherent difficulties in determining when and how results will occur for public diplomacy-related efforts.

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## USAID Performance Indicators for Independent Media Development Efforts Frequently Established

In the cases we reviewed, USAID performance indicators for independent media efforts were frequently established at the country or USAID mission level and for individual projects. For example, six of the nine USAID missions we reviewed established performance indicators in their current planning documents for their missions' independent media performance objectives. In addition, all missions we obtained documentation from had established performance indicators for country-specific projects.<sup>13</sup> USAID officials told us that the establishment of specific independent media performance objectives is left to the discretion of the local USAID mission and that some missions with active independent media development projects or activities may not choose to designate media-related performance objectives based on their relative priorities, or they may view media development as a crosscutting issue or as a tool for accomplishing other specific objectives.<sup>14</sup> See table 3 for a list of the objectives and performance indicators for USAID missions in the countries we reviewed.

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<sup>13</sup>Seven of the nine USAID missions provided us with documentation on performance indicators for specific independent media projects; we did not obtain relevant documentation from the USAID missions in Egypt and Mali.

<sup>14</sup>If performance objectives (referred to as strategic objectives or intermediate results by USAID) are established, USAID missions are required to establish performance indicators for those goals.

**Table 3: Performance Objectives and Indicators Related to USAID Independent Media Development Efforts from Select Performance Monitoring Plans**

Country	Performance objective	Mission performance indicators
Ukraine	Availability of quality information increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media sustainability index (MSI)</li> <li>• Quantity of information produced by partner regional outlets (print and broadcast)</li> <li>• Quality of information produced by partner regional outlets (print and broadcast)</li> </ul>
Croatia	Sustainable and balanced commercial media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased rating for Croatia on the overall average for media sustainability (MSI)</li> <li>• Freedom House's Press Freedom survey score</li> <li>• An increased rating for Croatia on the MSI, attribute 3: Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news</li> </ul>
	Journalists' professional standards improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased rating for Croatia on the MSI, attribute 2: Journalism meets professional standards of quality</li> </ul>
	Management and business capacity of media organizations strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased rating for Croatia on the MSI attribute 4: Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence</li> </ul>
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Viable private-sector broadcast and print media provide broad range of objective programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people who buy independent news publications</li> <li>• Audience share of independent broadcast media</li> </ul>
Kyrgyzstan	Increased availability of information on civic rights and domestic public issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSI</li> </ul>
	Increased news programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average daily minutes of nonstate electronic media local news programming</li> </ul>
	Improved financial management systems in targeted media entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical quality of local nongovernmental broadcast news</li> <li>• Quality of independent broadcast management.</li> </ul>
Georgia	Alternative media represents citizen concerns on key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of citizens who respond that the media fairly represent the views of all citizens</li> <li>• Percentage of stories/articles by USAID-assisted media outlets representing two or more viewpoints</li> </ul>
Mali	Increase public access to quality development information in targeted areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of Malians having access to at least one local radio station</li> <li>• Internet access costs</li> </ul>
	Regulatory and policy environment responsive to public interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriation of Internet management by a neutral institution</li> <li>• Internet access costs reduced</li> <li>• Mean time to obtain radio licenses reduced</li> </ul>
	Policies and procedures proposed for adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet regulatory policies proposed</li> <li>• Radio licensing procedures proposed</li> </ul>
	Improved quality of development information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of radio broadcasts that employ appropriate communication techniques</li> </ul>
	Enhanced institutional capacity to produce development information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of information content producers trained</li> <li>• Percentage of radio stations in targeted areas having trained staff in program production</li> </ul>
Haiti	Civil society organizations positively influence policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (No specific media indicators identified in mission performance monitoring plan)</li> </ul>

(Continued From Previous Page)

Country	Performance objective	Mission performance indicators
Indonesia	(Strengthening independent media is a cross-cutting objective, crossing all mission performance objectives)	• (No specific media indicators identified in mission performance monitoring plan)
Egypt	Establish and ensure media freedom and freedom of information	• (Under development)

Source: USAID.

<sup>a</sup>Indicates USAID intermediate results, subintermediate results, or lower-level results categories.

### State and USAID Missions Use Broad Indexes of Country Press Freedom That Cannot Measure Performance of U.S. Efforts

In the cases we reviewed, State and USAID often selected media indexes, such as the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) and Freedom House’s Press Freedom survey, to measure the results of their independent media development efforts. The MSI and the Press Freedom survey assess the freedom of media in a country; however, when used alone as performance indicators, media indexes are of limited utility in measuring the specific contributions of specific activities or combined U.S. efforts toward developing independent media in particular countries.

### State and USAID Rely Frequently on Media Indexes to Measure Performance

State and USAID commonly use media indexes to measure the performance of independent media efforts. In cases we reviewed where State had specifically defined performance indicators for its independent media development efforts, Freedom House’s Press Freedom survey and MSI were frequently used by the mission for measuring results. In the cases we reviewed, all four State missions that designated performance indicators relied on media indexes to measure the performance of their efforts.<sup>15</sup> For example, the U.S. Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina designated the MSI as its primary performance indicator for its independent media efforts. USAID missions we reviewed also frequently used the MSI and the Press Freedom survey as measures of performance. Of six USAID missions that established indicators for their performance goals, three used the media indexes as performance indicators. Some missions, including the USAID Missions to Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, used the MSI along with other measures they had created to measure the accomplishment of performance

<sup>15</sup>Media-specific indicators were established in current planning documents for the U.S. missions to Ukraine, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia. In addition to the MSI and Freedom House Press Freedom Survey, Freedom House’s Nations in Transit Independent Media Survey scores were used.

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objectives.<sup>16</sup> However, the USAID Mission to Croatia used the media indexes alone to measure performance objectives related to independent media development. In addition, the only performance indicators established for the USAID media project in Croatia were the four broad MSI components, including “journalists professional standards improved in Croatia” and “multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news.” USAID officials told us that the MSI index is generally promoted and used as an independent media development performance indicator in Europe and Eurasia and that it is generally used in coordination with more specific indicators of activities to determine program performance.

**Broad Indicators Assess Media Freedom, Not Necessarily a Measure of U.S. Efforts**

Media indexes used alone are of limited use for determining the performance of U.S. independent media development programs. Commonly used media indexes—such as the Press Freedom Survey and MSI in particular—cannot pinpoint the effects of U.S. government programs, and are general indicators rather than precise measures. These indexes use reasonably consistent methodologies to measure broad concepts such as press freedom and media sustainability. However, because the indexes focus on broad concepts that are affected by a wide variety of social, political, and economic factors, they have limited utility for purposes of identifying the effects of particular U.S. media development programs. The indexes do provide general measures of trends and allow for some cross-country comparisons. However, IREX has only been collecting data on the MSI for 3 years, which makes it impossible to evaluate longer term trends and establish baselines for efforts that began before 2001. Another concern is the time lag in the data of 1 year from scoring to publication.

Freedom House and IREX officials told us that the Press Freedom survey and MSI were not designed to measure the performance of U.S. media development programs. According to a senior Freedom House official, the Press Freedom survey was initially intended to inform debate and discussion about the state of media development in particular countries, and potentially could be used to prod particular countries to liberalize their

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<sup>16</sup>The USAID mission to Ukraine has hired a special marketing consultant to develop specific indicators of performance, including measures of the quality and quantity of news and information produced by partner media outlets, consumer satisfaction with partner media outlets, financial viability of partner outlets, and awareness of legal rights and responsibilities of journalists and media owners. Funds were set aside in the cooperative agreement for the development of such data.

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media. Freedom House's Press Freedom survey has been used to assess the freedom of the media in more than 100 nations since 1981. The Press Freedom survey evaluates countries' legal, political, and economic environments, scoring between 8 and 12 subcategories. According to IREX officials, the MSI was designed, with the support of USAID, to be used for making prioritized decisions on funding. IREX's Media Sustainability Index has assessed the sustainability of independent media in about 20 countries in Europe and Eurasia since 2001.<sup>17</sup> The MSI measures five objectives—free speech, professional journalism, plurality of news sources, business management, and supporting institutions—each of which includes between 7 and 9 subcategories. Freedom House and IREX officials both stated that use of the indexes for anything other than what they were designed for imply an unwarranted precision to their measures.

Some State and USAID officials indicated that they do not think media indexes alone are comprehensive indicators for measuring mission or project performance and supported the development of additional measures in some cases. However, they also told us that it is difficult to develop their own independent media development performance indicators for several reasons. In addition to funding constraints, agencies noted that there are also difficulties separating media efforts from broader goals and determining when and how results will occur for democracy-related or public diplomacy programs.<sup>18</sup> Some USAID officials in the field noted that USAID officials in Washington, D.C., supported using the MSI as a primary performance indicator and some USAID officials noted they viewed using the MSI as a cost-effective means to provide a common indicator to measure and compare the results of efforts in Europe and Eurasia.

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<sup>17</sup>Countries or territories assessed in the MSI include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

<sup>18</sup>State provided a list of some suggested measures for missions, including using the following as indicators when relevant independent media development goals are established: opposition parties have access to state-run media, independent media outlets are established, and mechanisms are established to provide citizens with information to make objective decisions about political and social choices.

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## Country-Specific and Programmatic Factors Can Impact Media Development Efforts

In all the cases we reviewed, countries faced changing political conditions or deficiencies in the legal, regulatory, or professional environments, which created challenges for planning and implementing independent media development efforts. In some cases, programmatic factors, such as unsustainable local partner organizations or lack of coordination at overseas missions, affected overall U.S. efforts or specific projects or activities in a country. The following media development challenges represent a sample of those frequently mentioned during our review.

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## Country-Specific Factors, Such as a Changing Political Society or Inadequate Legal, Regulatory and Professional Environments, Can Impact Media Development Efforts

A country's political conditions can impact efforts to plan and implement independent media development projects and activities. In January 2004, USAID surveyed its independent media development efforts, as well as those supported by other donors, and determined that different programmatic approaches are required for five different types of political societies, which USAID classified as: (1) closed, (2) semidemocratic/developing, (3) war-torn, (4) postconflict, and (5) transition. For semidemocratic, postconflict, or transitional countries making progress toward democracy or no longer experiencing conflict, USAID has identified a variety of activities to support the development of an independent media. However, in closed or war-torn societies, USAID determined it can do very little because the environments are unsuitable for outside intervention. See table 4 for definitions of political societies and further detail on the appropriate programmatic media strategies identified by USAID.



**Table 4: USAID Definition and Media Approach for Each Political Society**

<b>Political society</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>USAID media approach</b>
Closed	Closed societies are governed by monarchs, military dictators, or ideologues with a relatively closed political system and underdeveloped economy. Free press is almost nonexistent in these societies.	USAID or other international agencies have not designed or implemented major projects for independent media development in closed societies. The situation is likely to change because of the growing interest in promoting democracy in the Middle East.
Semidemocratic/ developing	Countries that appear to have made tangible progress toward democratization, but where stagnation and even backsliding occur, are considered semidemocratic developing societies. Independent media remains extremely fragile in such countries, and journalists work under trying conditions. Subtle forms of censorship and self-censorship continue, and the legal and regulatory environment is not conducive to a free press.	USAID and other international actors can undertake a wide variety of media projects, but strong political and diplomatic pressure is necessary to push for independent media in semidemocratic societies. If multiple donors work together, they increase the chances of gaining political support for independent media development.
War-torn	This category refers to countries with ongoing civil wars. Such societies tend to have highly authoritarian regimes and predatory social and political structures. Civil wars give the ruling regime a pretext to stifle whatever little freedom media enjoyed in the past.	USAID and other donors can do very little in such conditions, as the whole political environment, intellectual climate, and economic conditions are not suitable for outside interventions.
Postconflict	This category refers to countries where conflict has ended, leading to the establishment of a legitimate government. One distinguishing characteristic of these societies is that tremendous opportunities exist for establishing democratic institutions and practices.	Examples of the types of projects that can be undertaken in these countries include the following: establishing a legal framework for free media, supporting the government in establishing appropriate regulatory bodies, training journalists, assisting independent media outlets, and establishing civil society organizations that articulate the interests of journalists and a free press.
Transition	This category primarily refers to relatively socially and economically advanced societies in which the political order has collapsed, opening the way for liberalization and democratization.	As in postconflict societies, unprecedented opportunities for promoting independent media exist in these countries. Practically all of the programming strategies suggested for postconflict societies have been followed in transition countries.

Source: USAID.

We examined independent media development projects in nine different countries—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Krygyzstan, Mali, and Ukraine—each experiencing differing domestic political conditions that limit the impact of these projects. In some of the cases we reviewed, changes in domestic conditions or the status of political societies occurred following the onset of independent media development activities, creating further challenges in implementing efforts in these countries. For example, in Haiti—a nation experiencing civil conflict—violent demonstrations and protests prior to the departure of the

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president prevented some USAID-funded media development projects from continuing because staff were physically unable to get to work. Officials told us that several radio stations suffered extensive damage from looters, and community radio stations reported several cases where police, as well as government officials loyal to the president, tried to use their power to silence independent media voices. After the president's departure, all nonessential USAID staff were ordered to evacuate the country, and the media project was on hold for nearly a month.

In countries with deficient legal, regulatory, or professional environments, agencies can face challenges in implementing independent media development projects and activities. All nine of the countries we reviewed faced challenges due to deficiencies in at least one of these areas, which impacted efforts to train the media, build the capacity of the media outlets, and improve the freedom of the press within the country. In particular, these deficiencies have led to such challenges as limited press freedom due to direct government control over the media industry; changing legal and regulatory frameworks; limited training opportunities; and lack of skilled journalists due to widespread problems in professional and educational systems. Agency officials provided examples of how such deficiencies have impacted their programs:

- *Limited press freedom.* Prior to the revolution in Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz government maintained a tight hold on broadcast frequencies, prevented new stations from obtaining frequencies, and canceled frequencies of certain independent outlets. Agency officials said that journalists were afraid to broadcast on certain topics for fear of harassment or prosecution. In Georgia, most television stations are owned by oligarchs, many of whom support the new government. According to embassy officials in Tbilisi, working journalists exercise self-censorship for fear that reports critical of the government would be unpopular with their owners.
- *Changing legal and regulatory frameworks.* Although Ukraine's new president stated publicly his support for a free mass media, State officials said Ukraine's legal and regulatory environments still need assistance. Though legislation has been enacted to improve freedom of the press and oversight of the media industry, these changes have not been consistently applied by Ukrainian judges and media outlets. Therefore, journalists can still be pressured by government officials and oligarchs to report information in a certain way, and media outlets' legal status and license to operate remain in question.

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- *Limited training opportunities.* Since 1993, Mali's constitution has made it relatively easy to obtain radio broadcast licenses for FM frequencies. However, officials noted that there are currently no in-country professional training institutions for broadcast media. As a result, individuals have to go outside of Mali to receive training, or obtain informal training from their peers and colleagues.
  - *Lack of skilled journalists.* In Croatia, most journalists have little academic or professional training. Agency officials stated that although independent media is evolving, journalists still report biased news and information, do not check their facts or sources, do not follow up or correct their errors, and skew the focus of articles to accomplish personal agendas.

According to USAID's January 2004 media assistance study, USAID has funded a range of activities designed to further promote legal and regulatory reforms, though undemocratic structures, politicians, and slow-to-change traditions have made the creation of enabling laws, policies, and practices difficult or impossible in some cases. Assistance projects and training efforts have been designed to mitigate legal, regulatory, and professional deficiencies, though progress of these programs has been slow. Agency officials from missions in several countries we examined provided examples of approaches to addressing unregulated media environments, including the following:

- *Limited press freedom.* In order to limit editorial interference by state bodies, USAID's media project in Kyrgyzstan currently supports local efforts to draft a new broadcasting law, which would include stipulations for the transformation of state television and radio to a public broadcasting system. To dilute the editorial influence of oligarchs who own the vast majority of TV stations in Georgia, USAID's implementing partner in Tbilisi introduced a television rating system, which produced verifiable ratings that made the commercial market far more attractive to advertisers. The increased interest of advertisers in the media market has made nonbusiness-based policies more costly for oligarch owners.
- *Changing legal and regulatory frameworks.* USAID's media development project in Ukraine has established a Media Law Institute that will provide journalists with an outlet for legal defense and consultations when faced with political pressure. The center also plans

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to train local lawyers and judges on media law reform, and to publish bulletins about changes in legislation.

- *Limited training opportunities.* The USAID Mission to Mali has tried to address the lack of professional media training institutions by supporting a technical training facility, bringing professionals to Mali to conduct training sessions, and sending broadcast and print journalists as well as key members of the government and civil society to an anticorruption ethics training seminar.
- *Lack of skilled journalists.* Croatia's USAID media development project focused on developing the capacity of the national journalist association, including conferences to improve journalists' professionalism, their capacity for reporting, and their relationships with other sectors of society, such as the police and judiciary. Additionally, University of Zagreb's journalism school partnered with the U.S. Embassy to participate in academic exchange programs, international visits, and speaker programs.

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## Programmatic Factors Can Affect Media Development Efforts

The sustainability of local organizations can impact the overall results of media development efforts or the success of specific projects and activities in a country. Additionally, limited coordination and lack of communication with local recipients at some posts have impacted some projects and activities by causing confusion of responsibilities or duplication of efforts.

## Sustainability of Local Organizations Can Affect Long-Term Media Development Results

The success of media development projects and activities can be impacted by the sustainability of local partners. We found that seven of the nine countries we reviewed had cases where local media outlets had difficulty ensuring their financial sustainability as their U.S. funding decreased. Sustainability challenges were primarily due to a poor economic environment or lack of sufficient business management training. Specific examples include the following:

- *Poor economic environment.* An official from the USAID Mission in Haiti stated that because many independent radio stations are community owned, the stations cannot increase their operating budgets or replace expensive pieces of equipment without first increasing the financial resources available to the entire community. Additionally, the self-sustainability of private media outlets in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to be a major problem due to widespread crime and corruption and a national unemployment rate of about 40 percent.

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- *Lack of business management training.* According to one local television station owner in Croatia, a U.S.-sponsored national television network, designed to link several local station's news programs, is struggling to survive because the network did not develop the advertising revenue and profit-sharing structures necessary to keep it financially sustainable. USAID acknowledged that this may be the case, but they viewed the network project as a success because it had served to provide an alternative, independent news program to the state-controlled TV network during an earlier period of political transition.

To respond to these programmatic challenges, some USAID officials offered the following suggestions:

- *Poor economic environment.* The USAID Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina has focused on encouraging local business development strategies, and currently financially supports the survival of only a select number of media outlets. The USAID Mission in Mali told us that because of the country's high poverty rate, they conduct workshops for radio stations in order to provide them with small-business concepts that can be used to generate additional outside revenues, like the sale of solar power to provide lighting or the creation of centers to provide the community with computer services and Internet access.
- *Lack of business management training.* Since 2002, Georgia's USAID media project has worked to promote the sustainability of print and broadcast media outlets by improving their business management skills and establishing an independent and credible national system of television audience measurement. As a result of better information on the profile of viewers, TV advertising in Georgia increased from \$3 million to \$7 million in 2004 and is expected to increase to \$13 million by 2006.

Various studies have also offered suggestions for addressing the sustainability of media outlets. A working paper by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations on "International Media Assistance" suggested allowing more time during the life of a project to focus on sustainability. Another report published by USAID, *Media Assistance: Policy and Programmatic Lessons*, suggested that in postconflict societies, only media outlets willing to take concrete and concerted steps toward economic independence should be given technical or financial assistance. According to this study, USAID has implemented several

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activities that promote the financial independence or sustainability of media outlets, but these activities have achieved only limited success.

### Limited Coordination at Some Locations Can Result in Confusion of Responsibilities and Duplication of Efforts

While not as widespread as other programmatic challenges, we found that four of the nine countries we examined were challenged by coordination issues, such as an unclear chain of command and limited communication, which resulted in confusion over the responsibilities of donors and providers of media development, duplication of efforts, or periods of program inactivity. For example, the director of a Croatian media development project worked with three different U.S. donors, with no clear chain of command established. Thus, the director was unsure to whom he should report under certain circumstances, resulting in difficulty in reacting to urgent needs. In another case we reviewed, State and USAID had unknowingly funded different NGOs that were working independently to rebuild the same radio stations that had been destroyed during the recent tsunami in Indonesia, leading to on-the-ground project conflicts. Officials at the USAID Mission to Indonesia told us this duplication of effort resulted from their lack of awareness of a grant awarded by State's DRL bureau in Washington, D.C., that was similar to the grant USAID awarded.<sup>19</sup> Poorly maintained roads, combined with poor phone and Internet access, contributed to communication and coordination challenges faced by the USAID Mission in Haiti and the community radios it supports; this, in turn slowed USAID's training activities, the delivery of equipment, and other activities. USAID officials said they are planning to install Internet and phone lines in rural areas to improve the situation.

One example of effective coordination can be found in Ukraine. Ukraine is challenged by a complicated network of donors, providers, and recipients (see fig. 1), multiple ongoing projects, various funding sources, and agencies funding the same organizations and similar activities. For example, four separate organizations, including the U.S. Embassy (via the Media Development Ffund), Internews Network (via a cooperative agreement via the USAID mission), the International Renaissance Foundation, and NED (via its annual grant from State), currently provide U.S.-sponsored funding or programmatic activities to the advocacy and media monitoring organization Telekritika. However, in Kiev, USAID and State officials have worked well together to minimize coordination

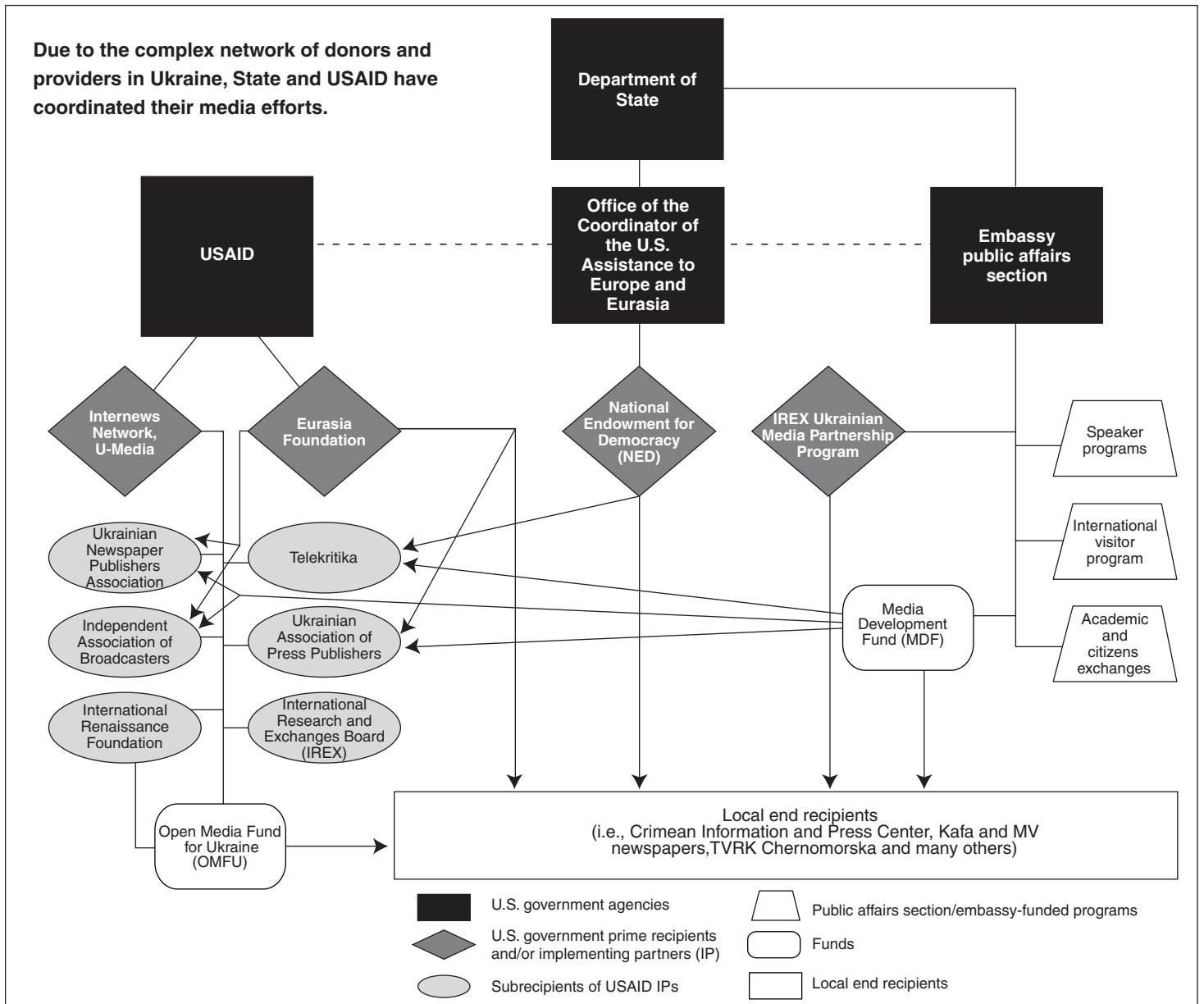
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<sup>19</sup>In May 2005, USAID Indonesia completed its media strategy that sets out broad strategic parameters with respect to media programming, including some attention on the tsunami-affected region of Aceh.

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problems by keeping track of donor awards on a Web site and attending donor coordination meetings on a monthly basis. According to USAID officials, the Web site “Marketplace for Donors” is funded jointly by State (the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, public affairs section) and the International Renaissance Foundation.

**Figure 1: U.S.-Sponsored Independent Media Development Projects and Activities in Ukraine**



Sources: GAO; Nova Development (clip art).



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Media evaluations have made specific suggestions to improve the coordination of donors, providers, and recipients of independent media development programming in order to minimize the confusion of responsibilities and duplication of efforts. An evaluation by the University of Oxford, "Mapping Media Assistance," suggested donors and providers coordinate the distribution of their limited resources in a systematic and logical manner, based on their areas of specialization. The Netherlands Institute of International Relations working paper on "International Media Assistance," suggested establishing a strategic coordination mechanism, like the European Media Agency for the European Union, that could serve as a clearinghouse and evaluator of all media-related assistance proposals for the targeted countries.

To address challenges in coordination, USAID funds regional media conferences and has conducted a limited number of independent media program evaluations, so that participants can share lessons learned; however, these efforts face funding constraints. USAID has funded six independent media development regional conferences in Europe and Eurasia and one multiregional conference over the past 8 years. These conferences have brought together journalists, media development donors, providers, and civil society organizations to discuss issues in journalism that transcend borders. USAID has also designated the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination to conduct several assessments of independent media programs in various countries and identify lessons learned and best practices. In addition, USAID bureaus and missions have conducted several different types of studies on independent media efforts, including midterm assessments, final reports, and program evaluations. According to the Policy and Program Coordination bureau director, USAID's independent media evaluations have created a body of knowledge and lessons learned on subjects ranging from conflict areas to transitional countries. However, USAID media officials noted that the discontinuation of funding for conferences and limited funding levels for evaluations could reduce the amount of collaboration and sharing of lessons learned officials said is necessary to enhance media development programming efforts. Additionally, several media officials indicated that in some instances insufficient funding for USAID program evaluations has forced media development providers to fund their own evaluations through their project budgets, thus reducing funds available for development activities. Although USAID requires its evaluations to be posted on the Development Experience Clearinghouse to make them accessible to other posts, one senior official said it was unclear to what degree the lessons learned from evaluations are shared or used by missions. For example, one official in

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Croatia said that program evaluations are shared only within the region due to concerns that other countries' approaches may not be relevant.

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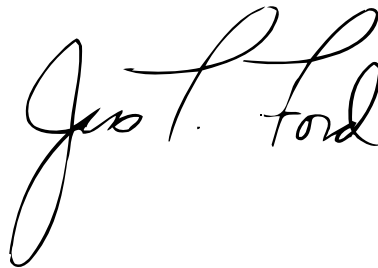
## Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator for their review and comment. State generally concurred with our report, and USAID offered technical comments that were incorporated, as appropriate. In addition, State indicated that it plans to develop additional performance indicators and promote best practices in the future. The comments provided by State are reprinted in appendix IV, and comments by USAID are reprinted in appendix V.

We are sending copies of this report to other interested Members of Congress. We are also sending copies to the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. We will also make copies available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff has any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-4268 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jess T. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jess T. Ford  
Director, International Affairs and Trade

# Scope and Methodology

To accomplish our objectives, we reviewed documentation and spoke with officials from the Department of State (State), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), and key U.S. nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners, including the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), Internews, The Asia Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, and the International Center for Journalists. In addition, we reviewed USAID's guidance for performance measurement. Department of Defense media activities were not included in the scope of our work as its primary focus in the media field is on conducting psychological operations.

In addition to audit work performed in the United States, we traveled to and reviewed documentation on U.S.-sponsored independent media development programs in Croatia, Ukraine, and Indonesia. These countries were primarily selected based on geographic representation; preliminary estimates on funding and years of assistance provided;<sup>1</sup> and the range of programs offered. During travel to Croatia, Ukraine, and Indonesia, we met with State Department and USAID officials; multiple nonprofit, private donor, and multilateral officials; and program recipients to discuss issues of coordination, funding, measuring of program effectiveness, and challenges faced when implementing foreign independent media development programs. We also sent questions to and reviewed select documentation from posts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, and Mali.

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## Agency Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Obligations

In order to determine estimates for agency fiscal year 2004 obligations, we obtained data from State, USAID, the BBG, and select NGOs. Assessments of the reliability of the data yielded mixed results, but provided an overall indication of the minimum level of funding for the agency.

## USAID and Select NGOs

USAID's historic budget obligations from USAID's Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance bureau proved to be unreliable because (1) USAID historic budget records on media development programs are incomplete after 1996 because agencywide budget codes related to media activities were discontinued at this time; (2) USAID budget records were

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<sup>1</sup>With the exception of two countries that we were not able to obtain initial estimates for, case studies and follow-up countries were selected that had estimated U.S. investments of over \$1 million for independent media development.

not finalized for fiscal year 2004; and (3) historic funding codes could not be recoded or configured to accurately reflect the specific activities of missions falling under our definition of independent media development. In addition, although USAID officials indicated that individual missions currently track spending for various program components—including media development—independent media projects can often be defined differently or be intermixed within broader civil society projects; thus, missions may record media funding levels inconsistently. Given this determination, we instead obtained USAID fiscal year 2004 obligations from NGOs that USAID identified as the main implementers of independent media development projects. In particular, we gathered documentation separately from the International Center for Journalists, Internews, The Eurasia Foundation, the Asia Foundation, and IREX. USAID officials told us that the true figure for USAID fiscal year 2004 obligations is likely significantly higher than our estimate because (1) we were not able to obtain documentation from all NGOs that received independent media development grants from USAID headquarters;<sup>2</sup> (2) we were not able to obtain data on fiscal year 2004 obligations awarded directly by USAID missions to local NGOs; and (3) we may not have captured all budget accounts that funded obligations for fiscal year 2004.<sup>3</sup>

State Department and the  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

We gathered State Department fiscal year obligation data by obtaining documentation from the following bureaus or offices: Democracy Human Rights and Labor (DRL), the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia (EUR/ACE), Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), International Information Programs (IIP), Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and State's regional bureaus.<sup>4</sup> We requested the bureaus and offices include 2004 budget obligations that met our definition of media assistance programs and exclude programs funded by the State

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<sup>2</sup>We obtained documentation or records on fiscal year 2004 obligations made by USAID from the main NGO providers that receive independent media development grants from USAID headquarters, including the International Center for Journalists, IREX, the Asia Foundation, and Internews. In addition, we obtained information from the Eurasia Foundation on the amount in subgrants it awarded during fiscal year 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Some agency budget accounts fund obligations for only 1 fiscal year, over 2 fiscal years, or until funds are expended (also called "no-year" money). In some instances, we were not able to associate an obligated amount to a particular fiscal year.

<sup>4</sup>State's East Asia and Pacific bureau reported actual expenditures. Agency officials indicated that these expenditures were approximations because of the time of year that the data were collected.

Department via interagency transfers to USAID or BBG. To assess the reliability of the obligation data, we (1) posed a standard set of questions to State officials, and (2) reviewed the list provided for consistency with our definition of media assistance programs. According to State officials, some variation existed in the techniques used to compile the programs and budget obligations. For example, some bureaus or agencies relied on electronic databases to gather information, while others did not have these systems. We found the list of programs to be consistent with the media assistance program definition in our request. We determined that the data provided by State were sufficiently reliable to provide an estimate of 2004 budget obligations for media assistance programs. We were not able to specifically determine NED's fiscal year 2004 obligations from State for independent media development projects because NED receives several broad grants each year for its work to support democratic initiatives. However, we were able to obtain information from NED on the amount in subgrants for media development activities it awarded during fiscal year 2004.<sup>5</sup>

Broadcasting Board of  
Governors

We determined fiscal year 2004 obligations data provided by the BBG to be sufficiently reliable following an interview with BBG officials to assess data reliability. The key factors in making the determination were that BBG (1) used one budget account for the program area, and (2) routinely performed checks on the reliability of the database used.

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Review of Media  
Development Indexes

To address our objective of examining agency performance measurement for independent media development efforts, we also (1) reviewed available agency, country, and program-level performance documentation for the case study countries; and (2) assessed the principle media development indexes—Freedom House's Press Freedom survey and the IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI). Our analysis of the Press Freedom survey and the IREX MSI included interviews with officials at the organizations responsible for the indexes and interviews with State and USAID officials to determine the strengths and limitations of the data.

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<sup>5</sup>The data showed that during fiscal year 2004, NED awarded approximately \$6.5 million in subgrants for independent media development projects.

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## Challenges to Media Development

To address the challenges that the United States faces in implementing media development activities and achieving results, we interviewed or requested information from State and USAID officials in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, and Ukraine. State and officials at all nine missions were asked to list the challenges their mission has dealt with while implementing media development programs and provide specific examples of how each challenge impeded the effectiveness of their program. The officials were also asked to explain the steps their mission took to mitigate these challenges. Although the challenges provided could not be generalized worldwide, we believe that the steps taken to mitigate the challenges, or lessons learned, should be shared globally. Lastly, we reviewed several media development studies published between 2000 and 2005 by State, USAID, the Knight Foundation, University of Oxford, Freedom House, IREX, Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, UNESCO, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, World Bank Institute Development Studies, and Routledge Group. We did not review these studies for sufficiency of methodology.

# Select International Organizations or Donors That Implement Media Development Programs

Select non-U.S. donors	Program description
European Commission	Provides major source of funding for media development at the European level as part of its larger program of human rights and democratization. Includes both macroprojects, implemented in partnership with international organizations (like the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE) that work with local entities, and microprojects that directly fund local organizations.
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)	Supports freedom of the press and freedom of information by providing training for journalists and technicians, setting up radio stations, and monitoring freedom of information in the media. OSCE also assists and advises governmental authorities as well as print and electronic media in their endeavour to reform the media sector.
Open Society Institute and Soros Foundations Network	Concentrates on projects addressing issues of democratic media legislation, monitoring violations of media freedom, protecting journalists, establishing self-regulation systems and strong independent professional organizations, and raising the professionalism of journalists and media managers.
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Provides training to journalists and technical media staff to strengthen independent media, establishes independent printing plants and print distribution networks, and develops public service broadcasting— including the establishment of a regulatory framework and support for TV productions and co-productions.
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Promotes global access to information by strengthening the legal and regulatory environment for freedom and pluralism information, supporting capacity strengthening, networking, and elevation of standards of media at national and local levels; raising awareness on rights to official access to information; and developing communication mechanisms for vulnerable groups.
World Bank	Supports civil society with direct funding support—often provided in partnership with other international aid donors—to back programs such as information technology access and human rights.

Source: Select non-U.S. donors.

Note: Media development funding from these various donors was not readily available, not presented in similar formats, and not easily verifiable.

# State Department and USAID Goals Related to Independent Media

**Table 5: Goals Related to Select Independent Media Development Programs from Current State Mission Performance Plans**

Country	Strategic goals	Performance goals, strategies, and media-related tactics
Croatia	Democratic systems and practices/ democracy and human rights	<p><b>Goal:</b> Croatia completes democratic transition away from its socialist and authoritarian past and puts in place democratic institutions needed for integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Support transparent and accountable democratic systems, full integration of minorities into national and local political structures, combat trafficking in persons, and improve the climate for independent media.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> Promote independent media through exchange and training programs to expose Croatian journalists and editors to U.S. practices.</p>
Ukraine	Democratic systems and practices/ democracy and human rights	<p><b>Goal:</b> Ukraine meets Euro-Atlantic standards of democratic practice and human rights.</p> <p><b>Strategy 1:</b> Support the capacity of the citizenry to engage effectively in promoting its rights and interests for a more democratic Ukraine.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> Foster the growth of NGOs that promote and defend human rights, religious freedom, and media freedom.</p> <p><b>Strategy 2:</b> Encourage Ukrainian government institutions to become more effective, transparent, and accountable to the citizens within an overall rule of law framework.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> Develop and maintain a wide range of contacts in government, academia, media, think tanks, and the international community to advocate effectively and monitor progress, both in the government and in society as a whole.</p>
	International public opinion/public diplomacy and public affairs	<p><b>Goal:</b> Public Opinion in Ukraine moves towards U.S./Western values.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Strengthen the capacity of Ukrainian media and civic organizations to present a balanced view of domestic and international events.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactics:</b> Employ bilateral engagements, including sustained high-level demarches, in support of a free press, access to information, and journalists' rights to freely exercise their profession; coordinate with the European Union and G-7 and other key countries, donors, and institutions on matters including assistance, policy, and demarches; support grassroots media initiatives such as expansion of Internet access by regional media, substantive newspaper supplements, and TV documentaries through embassy, AID, NGO, and foundation projects; provide technical assistance for projects that strengthen independent media, journalist advocacy, and managerial capacity of independent media; finance legal assistance for journalists and media outlets to improve the legal and regulatory framework for media, including access to information.</p>
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Democratic systems and practices/ democracy and human rights	<p><b>Goal:</b> Bosnia-Herzegovina is an accountable, transparent democracy with a robust civil society and respect for human rights.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Increase citizen participation in political/social decision making, particularly in public sector reform. Media outlets provide useful information to citizens as basis for making informed judgments and identify areas where public pressure can be usefully applied.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactics:</b> Assist viable private sector broadcast and print media to provide a broad range of objective programming; provide technical assistance and political support to the Bosnian Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK), Press Council, Association of Electronic Media, journalist associations, and media training providers; support domestic production.</p>
	International public opinion/public diplomacy and public affairs	<p><b>Strategy:</b> Influence public opinion and explain U.S. positions on global issues including the war on terrorism, Iraq, and the Middle East; stress democratic and economic themes related to European and Euro-Atlantic integration, rule of law, trafficking in persons, development of an independent and professional media, and private sector growth.</p>



**Appendix III  
State Department and USAID Goals Related  
to Independent Media**

*(Continued From Previous Page)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Strategic goals</b>	<b>Performance goals, strategies, and media-related tactics</b>
Kyrgyzstan	Democratic systems and practices/ democracy and human rights	<p><b>Goal:</b> Encourage the growth of an active and informed civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic; help build independent media that report objectively and freely; encourage strong democratic institutions including an independent parliament and independent judiciary; support active independent political parties, rule of law, respect for human rights, and free and fair and transparent elections.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Increase the quality, quantity, and accessibility of information available to Kyrgyz citizens.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactics:</b> Work with government officials to press for reform of media and libel laws and for decrease in pressure against independent media; support independent media through programs to provide independent printing facilities, legal counsel, institutional support to journalists' associations, and training in new media technology; support journalists' professional associations and their capacity to monitor and document press freedom infringements and advocate on these issues with the government; monitor violations of press freedom and report on policy and trends affecting media; teach objective journalism and management skills to increase media outlets' professional and economic viability; support programs that encourage political dialogue and debate, such as discussion clubs and TV/radio talk shows, and ensure that remote areas also have access to such programs; increase the accessibility to diverse forms of information about political, economic, and social issues for all citizens; support spread of Internet access throughout the country.</p>
Haiti	Stable conditions in fragile or failing states/ counterterrorism	<p><b>Goal:</b> Support the transition of Haiti in the context of a long-term effort to strengthen democratic practices, invest in people through education and training, and economic development.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Use of all mission resources effectively to strengthen democratic institutions and practices, promote the rule of law and good governance, and strengthen civil liberties.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactics:</b> Strengthen the independent press; strengthen media independence and community radio networks.</p>
Georgia	Democratic systems and practices/ democracy and human rights	<p><b>Goal:</b> Georgia's democratic reforms are consolidated, resulting in adherence to the rule of law, improved government transparency and accountability, reduced corruption and broad public participation in political life.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Foster the development of an increasingly vibrant civil society. Assist in building a vibrant and diverse civil society, including political parties, independent and responsible media, and constituency-based NGO coalitions to advocate for reforms in Georgia, and to partner with the new government in carrying out key reforms.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactics:</b> Increase journalistic professionalism through U.S. and locally based assistance for print and broadcast media.</p>
Egypt	American values respected abroad/public diplomacy and public affairs	<p><b>Goal:</b> U.S. core values advanced in Egypt through the Middle East Partnership Initiative and public diplomacy programs.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Foster pluralism and democracy in Egypt.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> Initiate new program to support journalism training on free, fair, and accurate reporting through both classroom work and internships with U.S. news media.</p>

**Appendix III  
State Department and USAID Goals Related  
to Independent Media**

*(Continued From Previous Page)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Strategic goals</b>	<b>Performance goals, strategies, and media-related tactics</b>
Indonesia	Democratic systems and practices	<p><b>Goal:</b> Indonesia consolidates political reforms, addresses the causes of separatist and ethnic crises, and enhances protections for vulnerable populations.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b> Help transform Indonesia’s civilian governmental institutions—including the parliament, ministries, and judicial sector—into efficient, democratically functioning entities.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> Professionalize media through exchange and training programs.</p>
	Mutual understanding	<p><b>Goal:</b> Increase understanding for American values, policies, and initiatives to create a receptive environment in Indonesia.</p> <p><b>Strategy 1:</b> Conduct a variety of exchanges to increase mutual understanding and build trust between American and Indonesia people and institutions.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> U.S. Fulbright lecturers, students, and researchers outreach on the topic of free and responsible media.</p> <p><b>Strategy 2:</b> Ensure the basic human values embraced by Americans are respected and understood by the Indonesia public and institutions.</p> <p><b>Media-related tactic:</b> Provide Small Democracy Grants to bolster free and independent media.</p>

Source: State Department.

**Appendix III  
State Department and USAID Goals Related  
to Independent Media**

**Table 6: Objectives for Select Independent Media Development Programs from Current USAID Country Strategies<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Case study country</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>	<b>Performance objectives and objectives for activities</b>
Ukraine	Citizens increasingly engaged in promoting their interests and rights for a more democratic market-oriented state	<b>Performance objective:</b> Availability of quality information increased.
Croatia	More effective citizen participation and improved governance	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Sustainable and balanced commercial media; journalists' professional standards improved; management and business capacity of media organizations strengthened.
Bosnia-Herzegovina	A more participatory, inclusive democratic society	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Increased citizen participation in political and social decision making; viable private-sector broadcast and print media provide a broad range of objective programming.
Georgia	More effective, responsible, and accountable local governance	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Independent media highlights citizens' concerns and informs communities on key issues. <b>Objectives for activities:</b> Increased media professionalism to provide objective information at both the national and local level; better business management of local media outlets and increased financial management; improved legal and regulatory framework that supports free speech and access to information.
Kyrgyzstan	Strengthened democratic culture among citizens and target institutions	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Increased availability of information on civic rights and domestic public issues; increased news programming and improved financial and management systems in targeted media entities.
Haiti	Genuinely inclusive democratic governance attained	<b>Performance objective:</b> Civil society organizations positively influence policies.
Indonesia	Effective democratic and decentralized governance  (Independent media development is considered a cross-cutting issue)	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Expanding participatory, effective and accountable local governance. <b>Objectives for activities:</b> Civil society organizations and other stakeholders such as universities, religious-based organizations, business associations, labor associations, and the media develop the capacity to effectively participate in local decision-making and advocacy processes. <b>Performance objectives:</b> Consolidating the reform agenda. <b>Objectives for activities:</b> Unions and press councils provide policy advice and advocate on behalf of media legislation, undertaking litigation to seek compliance with media laws and regulations, and the provision of legal aid and services in the defense of journalists and the media industry; work with civil society organizations to support the laws that give media freedom; support media initiatives that promote transparency and freedom of information. <b>Performance objectives:</b> Addressing conflict and encouraging pluralism. <b>Objectives for activities:</b> Media Coverage in conflict areas becomes objective and noninflammatory; support program that gives information to the tsunami affected area.
Mali	Increase public access to quality development information in targeted areas	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Regulatory and policy environment responsive to public interest. <b>Performance objectives:</b> Policies and procedures proposed for adoption. <b>Performance objectives:</b> Improved quality of development information; enhanced institutional capacity to produce development information.

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**Appendix III  
State Department and USAID Goals Related  
to Independent Media**

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*(Continued From Previous Page)*

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<b>Case study country</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>	<b>Performance objectives and objectives for activities</b>
Egypt	Initiatives in governance and participation strengthened	<b>Performance objectives:</b> Establish and ensure media freedom and freedom of information.

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Source: USAID.

<sup>a</sup>Strategic objectives and performance objectives (also called intermediate results) are included that we judged to be related to mission independent media development efforts.

# Comments from the Department of State



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer*

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

JUL 15 2005

Ms. Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers  
Managing Director  
International Affairs and Trade  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

Dear Ms. Williams-Bridgers:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "INDEPENDENT MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ABROAD: Challenges Exist in Implementing U.S. Efforts and Measuring Results," GAO Job Code 320306.

The enclosed Department of State comments are provided for incorporation with this letter as an appendix to the final report.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Morris Jacobs, Senior Advisor, Office of Planning and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, at (202) 647-0444

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Kaplan".

Sid Kaplan (Acting)

cc: GAO – Melissa Pickworth  
R – Tim Isgitt  
State/OIG – Mark Duda

**INDEPENDENT MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ABROAD: Challenges  
Exist in Implementing U.S. Efforts and Measuring Results  
(GAO-05-803, GAO Code 320306)**

The Department wishes to thank GAO for the opportunity to review this report in draft.

We believe the report represents a solid effort to identify the challenges facing the U.S. Government in its efforts to support the development of independent media around the world. As the report notes, this is a key component of our strategy to help build sustainable democracies around the world, and by doing so to enhance our own national security.

We agree with GAO's assessment of the difficulties inherent in measuring the effectiveness of independent media programs, particularly at the field or post level. The Department is currently developing a new set of performance indicators for public diplomacy and is looking to include media development and outreach activities as part of that framework. Specifically, the recently-established Office of Policy, Planning and Resources in the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs plans to launch a program evaluation of media training programs in fiscal year 2006. This will include an assessment of performance at the field level, and to that end we are working to gather performance data.

We understand that some tools used by State and USAID to measure the impact of our media development support -- IREX and Freedom House studies of national media sustainability -- track country performance rather than specific program performance. However, we do believe that if the United States is the only or most significant donor in the field of independent media development, it is possible to take some degree of credit for sectoral improvement. While we cannot take full credit or responsibility for national measures of success, we can plausibly state that our programs have had impact where we see country progress based on these and similar measurements.

Finally, we note the coordination issues contained in the report. We plan to use some of this information in the future to highlight "best practices" for our posts and program elements. This issue will also figure in our discussions with USAID as we revise our current joint Strategic Plan.

# Comments from the U.S. Agency for International Development



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

July 19, 2005

Mr. Jess Ford  
Director  
International Affairs and Trade  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Ford:

I am pleased to provide the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) formal response on the draft GAO report entitled Independent Media Development Abroad: Challenges Exist in Implementing U.S. Efforts and Measuring Results, [GAO-05-803]. (July 2005)

Extensive comments have been submitted under separate cover from relevant Bureaus in Washington, including the Europe and Eurasia Bureau, and from the Office of Democracy and Governance in the Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau. Additional comments have been provided from USAID missions in Europe and Asia.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GAO draft report and for the courtesies extended by your staff in the conduct of this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Wisecarver".

Steven G. Wisecarver  
Acting Assistant Administrator  
Bureau for Management

U.S. Agency for International Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20523  
[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

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# GAO Contact and Staff and Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

Jess T. Ford, (202) 512-4268

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## Staff Acknowledgments

Diana Glod, Melissa Pickworth, Julia A. Roberts, and Joe Carney made key contributions to this report. Martin de Alteriis, Ernie Jackson, Amanda K. Miller, and Valerie J. Caracelli provided technical assistance.



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