U.S. Government Funding for Media: Trends and Strategies

A Report to the Center for International Media Assistance

By Peter Cary
With Rosemary D'Amour

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About the Authors

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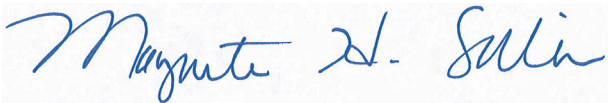
Preface

The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) at the National Endowment for Democracy commissioned this study about trends and strategies in U.S. government funding of media development. The analysis is based on an examination of proposals for media development projects and regional and global funding for media freedom and freedom of information provided by the State Department.

CIMA is grateful to Peter Cary, a veteran journalist, and Rosemary D'Amour, CIMA's project coordinator for research, for their insights on this topic.

We hope that this report will become an important reference for international media assistance efforts.

Marguerite H. Sullivan
Senior Director
Center for International Media Assistance

Executive Summary

U.S. government support for international media development is declining. Spending by the Department of State and USAID for media freedom and freedom of information programs has dropped 43.5 percent in the past five years–from $135 million in Fiscal Year 2008 to approximately $76.3 million in FY 2012, according to figures supplied by the State Department.

This trend and others related to U.S. government support for media development are the subject of this report, which analyzes how U.S. government grant making for media assistance has changed over time and looks at possible reasons those changes have occurred.

The data underpinning the report is drawn from two main sources: the State Department's Office of Foreign Assistance Resources, which tracks allocations for foreign aid, and from an in-depth examination and analysis of grant proposals solicited by the U.S. government over the past five years containing at least one media development component.

Funding for media freedom and freedom of information programs has dropped 43.5 percent in the past five years.

Each year USAID and the U.S. Department of State issue solicitations or tenders for dozens of media development projects they want to undertake around the world. These solicitations, often in the form of requests for proposals or applications, typically state the nature of the project, the dollar amount the agency wants to spend, the country or countries for which it is proposed, and the number of years it is to run. There are technical differences among them: Some are written fairly tightly and result in prescriptive contracts with heavy government oversight (Request for Proposals); others describe an issue or theme to be addressed and solicit participants for grants or cooperative agreements (Request for Applications); some may describe an issue to be addressed and solicit ideas to achieve a broad result, (Annual Program Statement);[1] and some are even more generally looking for new ideas to solve problems (Requests for Statement of Interest.)

The yearly lists of projects that are put out to bid provide a window into grant making at USAID and the State Department, although not necessarily a comprehensive picture. Some projects, for example, take place in sensitive countries or regions and are not publicly announced; others may not be competed because an organization offers an exclusive product or service. To maintain the ability to respond rapidly in crises, huge

omnibus grants may be awarded to consortiums of implementers, and the proposal may only be sent to a short list of likely competitors who have pre-competed for the grant. The Center for International Media Assistance collected data from these proposals encompassing fiscal years 2008-2012. Meanwhile, the State Department maintains a database that tracks spending for all foreign aid, and it is able to separate out spending for the Media Freedom and Freedom of Information categories by region.[2]

Taken together, the two sets of data reveal some noteworthy developments:

- A major decline in overall spending for media and freedom of information, especially over the past three years (2010-2012).

- A "bubble" in media spending in the Middle East and North Africa from 2008-2011.

- A similar bubble in media spending over the same years in South and Central Asia, mainly due to media-related work in Afghanistan.

- A continual uptrend in media-related programs and projects in Africa.

- Only small amounts of spending in the Western Hemisphere and in East Asia and the Pacific region.

- Some major thematic changes: a huge movement into digital media, much use of communications to bring about behavior change, and an increasing allocation of resources toward media for development.

Interviews with media development experts inside and outside government yield an even fuller picture of how media grants are created and awarded and how they are changing. Some examples:

Over the years, there have been only a few "pure" media development projects, that is projects whose entire scope and funding is dedicated to assistance, support, or development of independent media. Even fewer have been dedicated to investigative reporting. (That may partly be due to the fact that some organizations dedicated to investigative reporting will not take government money.) Media development or assistance is most often just one part of larger democracy-building or civil society projects. Nearly all new projects have some digital or ICT component, and new media and social media are increasingly being employed. Internet Freedom programs have also taken off in the last five years.

A recent trend has developed toward projects that use communications to change behavior, such as vaccination programs, within a larger project of say $100 million. In terms of dollars spent this so-called media for development has eclipsed independent media development.

As media independence is seen as a key element of democracy building, media development projects are generally created on a country-by-country basis, depending on local conditions. However, media development needs to be seen not just as an important element in civil society but as an equally important part of economic and overall development, and should be treated as such in the aid process.

Mechanisms for Soliciting Bids

The term RFP is often used as shorthand to refer to any of the several solicitation instruments used by the government to solicit bids. But there are key differences:

- An RFP is a Request for Proposals. It is generally used when the government wants to enter into an acquisition contract, and oversight will be strict and tight.

- An RFA (Request for Applications) is a more general solicitation; it can be narrowly focused or wide open. The final instrument is likely to be a cooperative agreement (limited government involvement) or a grant (even less government involvement.)

- An APS is an Annual Program Statement, often seeking innovative or new approaches to address a weakness in a country. It normally leads to a grant with real flexibility for the implementer.[1]

- An RSOI (Request for Statements of Interest) is a mechanism used at times by State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to obtain two-paged concept papers to address a challenge. After the Statements of Interest (SOIs) are reviewed, those bidders deemed competitive are asked to submit full proposals and budgets, from which a winner or winner are chosen.[2] In the end, all of these are part of the machinery for competition.

In addition to the projects publicly advertised with RFPs and RFAs on Grants.gov, there is another realm of projects, known as "pre-competed " or "pre-competes," and media development can be part of them.

In a pre-competed grant, consortiums of implementers, usually with one primary partner, vie to be pre-qualified as a group vendor, with specialized secondary partners, who can be used on short notice. The consortiums of implementers compete with each other before a specific grant is conceptualized or announced but rather when the notion of a type of project that might suddenly be needed is planned. A snap election is an example. When a goal is building the capacities of journalists to cover an election that was called at the last minute, the consortium that has won the pre-compete can carry out the last-minute training. Otherwise, it would be months—well past an election—before the RFA could be announced and training occur.

There are two types of pre-competed awards. "Indefinite Quantity Contracts" are multi-year arrangements awarded to a family of bidders (a prime contractor and subordinates, for example). USAID has more than 30 standing Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs).[3] A Leader with Associates(LWA) award normally signifies a cooperative agreement, which is a more flexible arrangement.

USAID's Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) bureau manages a pre-competed cooperative agreement known as the Global Civil Society Strengthening Agreement (GCSS). The $200 million award, running from 2009 to 2014, was granted to Counterpart International and its dozen-plus consortium partners. These include the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and Freedom House.[4] Counterparts International's website for the program, gcssconnect.net, says it "allows missions to avoid the 2-6 months necessary to design and tender a solicitation." The $200 million "ceiling," or highest level of funding that is authorized for distribution through this award, is not an actual amount. The agreement mechanism permits USAID missions to "buy into" this award if they have programmatic needs and not enough time or available funding to complete the normal process of full and open competition for an individual award. USAID does have a competition advocate whose role is to ensure full and open competition is the normal practice.

A consortium member may be tasked to improve a country's regulatory framework, enhance media professionalism, assist in sustainability, or work with civil society organizations that do media work. IREX, for example, is currently working on a GCSS project to promote elections, accountability and civic engagement in Chad.[5]

"C-Change," meaning Communications for Change, is a large pre-competed USAID mechanism, funded for $113.8 million. DCHA ran C-Change from September 2007 until September 2012.[6] The idea behind C-Change was that communications could be used to change behavior, especially in critical health arenas. According to its website, www.c-changeprogram.org, its work was focused primarily on Africa with some work in Latin America and the Caribbean.

DRL has its own pre-competed mechanisms that can be called on to launch a project during a crisis. These differ from the USAID LWAs and IQCs in that funding has already been set aside for them. One for global projects is called the Fundamental Freedoms Fund and its leader is the National Democratic Institute. It was funded in 2011 for $3 million—projects could run over multiple years.[7] Another that focuses on the Near East is called the Justice and Dignity Initiative, and its leader is IREX. The Initiative was funded for three years in 2011 for $2.075 million. It was anticipated that it would pay for six to 12 programs ranging from $250,000 to $500,000.[8]

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2. Grants Process Overview, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/p/c23187.htm
3. USAID, Central Awards Listing/Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs), http://transition.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/iqc/iqc_dg.html.
4. Maggie Ferrand, "Award Solidifies Counterpart's Reputation for Excellence in civil Society Programming, counterpart.is, http://counterpart.org/blog/award-solidifies-counterparts-reputation-for-excellence-in-civil-society-pr.
5. IREX, Current Projects, http://www.irex.org/projects.
6. C-Change, Funding of Leader Award and Associate Awards, www.c-changeprogram.org.
7. Grants.gov, Fundamental Freedoms Fund, http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=93473
8. FundsforNGOs.org, "DRL Request for Proposals to fund the Justice and Dignity Initiative in the MENA countries," June 27, 2011, http://www.fundsforngos.org/latest-funds-for-ngos/drl-request-proposals-fund-justice-dignity-initiative-mena-countries/.

Funding Trends

The landscape of U.S. government assistance for media development is shifting. The amount of money the U.S. government allocated to media development has shrunk significantly over the last three years, and regional allocations and thematic emphasis have shifted also.

Tracking those shifts is difficult, however, as the public record of grant proposing and grant making is complex and often confusing. Numerous agencies and quasi-agencies fund media-related projects; the majority are at USAID or the State Department. They include, but are not limited to, USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA); its Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG); its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI); its Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E); the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL); its Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI); its Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA); embassies; the U.S. government-funded Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC); and the Department of Defense and other Cabinet departments. Their vehicles for the delivery of aid, often referred to in government as "mechanisms," may include grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts and may be competed, pre-competed, or non-competed.

They may be announced as Requests for Proposals (RFPs), Requests for Applications (RFAs), Annual Program Statements (APSs), or Requests for Statements of Interest (RSOIs). They may be tendered publicly or, less often, sent out only to small groups of likely responders. The impetus for media assistance may come from an embassy or the USAID mission in a country, from Washington headquarters, or from Congress. Media development may be targeted very specifically in a project, such as one designed to train investigative journalists in Ukraine, or it may be only a small part of a larger program, such as the training of citizen bloggers as part of a civil society strengthening program. Or media may be used as part of a public service campaign, such as the use of local radio to broadcast messages to help reduce HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. The latter is usually called "media *for* development."

Those trends and shifts have occurred for a number of reasons. Experts and government officials say that spending on media development and assistance projects is buffeted by the winds of national strategy, policy, and events. For example, programs to help develop robust media in post-Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations have, over time, waned and given way to media programs in the Middle East and Africa. Congressional committees or individual congressmen may write bills to create media-related programs. Media programs may be affected by country aid budgets, by whether media experts in government champion their causes, and even whether the projects can be judged to produce measureable results.

With regular frequency, the various agencies of the U.S. government that award media-related grants list their projects for bid on Grants.gov. While not all projects are publicly bid, most are, and they provide a window into grant making at USAID and the State Department. CIMA staff scoured USAID and State Department project proposals from 2008 to 2012 for any mention of media support, assistance, or development, and built a series of spreadsheets capturing these proposals. The collected data on what the planned activity would be is voluminous, but it has some weaknesses. For example, it is difficult to tell from a proposal how much of the grant will be dedicated to media work as it often is part of a larger focus, such as civil society work. Consequently, analysis of project lists cannot be used to determine total annual spending on media development. That information is more accurately supplied by the State Department, which maintains a database that tracks spending for all foreign aid and is able to separate out spending for media freedom and freedom of information. (See Appendix C: Methodology, Page 42)

Still, exact comparisons of spending from year to year are difficult because some of the numbers represent estimates or planning (FY 2011 and 2012), as opposed to known actual expenditures (in earlier years). The project proposals represent potential expenditures before a project is launched; the figures supplied by the State Department mostly represent expenditures after the fact. Precise numbers are also hard to come by because U.S. government media projects are often embedded in larger international development or civil society programs.

Analysis of the two sets of data yields some noteworthy trends:

- A serious decline in overall spending for media and freedom of information, especially over the past three years (2010-2012).

- A "bubble" in media spending in the Near East from 2008-2011.

- A similar bubble in media spending over the same years in South and Central Asia, mainly due to media-related work in Afghanistan.

- A continual uptrend in media-related programs and projects in Africa.

- Relatively small amounts of spending in the Western Hemisphere and in East Asia and the Pacific region.

U.S. Government Spending
Media Freedom and Freedom of Information
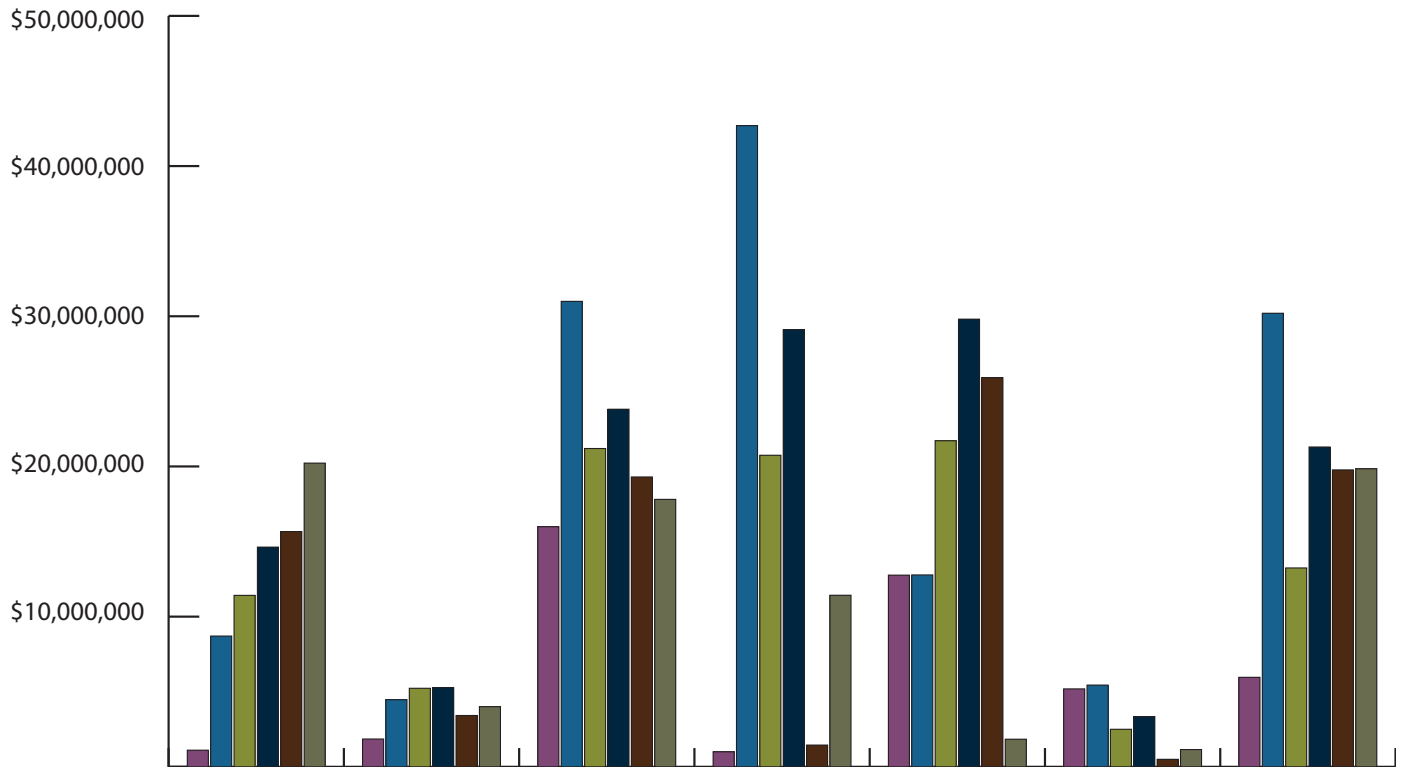
	Africa	East Asia Pacific	Europe and Eurasia	Near East	South and Central Asia	Western Hemisphere	Centrally Managed Programs
FY 2007	$1,108,000	$1,852,465	$15,986,980	$1,000,000	$12,763,285	$5,190,000	$5,960,000
FY 2008	$8,706,750	$4,468,124	$30,992,763	$42,690,126	$12,777,566	$5,442,780	$30,200,000
FY 2009	$11,416,152	$5,230,073	$21,194,184	$20,745,000	$21,710,859	$2,500,000	$13,242,000
FY 2010	$14,628,914	$5,261,490	$21,047,755	$29,098,175	$29,807,100	$3,636,000	$21,295,000
FY 2011	$15,664,000	$3,417,774	$19,300,206	$14,485,000	$25,906,515	$6,700,000	$19,770,787
FY 2012	$20,222,000	$4,004,358	$17,807,666	$11,423,500	$1,839,120	$1,150,000	$19,845,000

While it is harder to measure, the data also suggests some major thematic changes: The move into digital media development is huge, to the point where virtually all media development projects have a digital media component, which often incorporates increased use of social media. Using media to change the behavior of people, especially for health reasons, is growing rapidly; and, generally, funding for "media for development" has eclipsed independent media development. Projects to improve Internet freedom have taken off, while funding to support investigative reporting remains low.

Before the State Department put a spending tracking system in place in 2007, there was no way to know how much was being spent on democracy projects overall, let alone media assistance. But in 2005 the Government Accountability Office did an extensive review of global U.S independent media development, and its findings produced some useful data points.

It found that in FY 2004 the State Department and USAID obligated about $40 million for independent media efforts–$14 million from the State Department and at least $25.6 million at USAID. USAID officials told the GAO that they had spent an average of $33 million a year on independent media efforts since 1991, with amounts ranging from $13 million in 1992 to $61 million in FY 1999.

In 2004, about 60 percent of the funding went to projects in Europe and Eurasia. The Middle East, with the lowest level of press freedom at the time according to Freedom House, received only 2 percent of the effort. But that was soon to change. State Department officials told the GAO that independent media assistance funding would increase via the new Middle East Partnership Initiative, and USAID said it intended to provide up to four times the previous amount of media development funding to countries in the Middle East.

Indeed, USAID noted in 2005 that its mission in Egypt was in the process of starting a $15 million media project. At the same time, officials at an unnamed mission in a central European country expressed concern that a shift to the Middle East could hinder media development in European countries with "fragile and changing media environments."[3]

In an earlier report, CIMA tracked U.S. government spending for media development over five years starting in 2006. The data showed a spike in funding in 2008 as part a major investment in democracy and governance–including media–in Iraq and another in 2010 due to a similar investment in Afghanistan.[4]

The best current source of data on spending on media development lies in the numbers collected by the Department of State. Starting in 2007, the State Department's Office of Foreign Assistance Resources has provided CIMA with numbers from its tracking database for spending for "Media Freedom and Freedom of Information."

These figures show that there has been a decline in allocations for Media Freedom and Freedom of Information–from a high of $135 million in 2008 to $76.3 million in 2012. The falloff in recent years is mostly due to the cutbacks in media development funding associated with the U.S. drawdowns in Iraq and especially Afghanistan, a drop of $28 million from 2010 to 2012 in South and Central Asia and $17.7 million in the Near East–despite the Arab Spring.

Allocations for media freedom and freedom of information have risen steadily in Africa, from about $8.7 million in 2008 to an estimated $20.2 million in 2012. Meanwhile, media spending for Europe and Eurasia has tracked downward, from more than $30 million in 2008 to $17.8 million in 2012. Spending in Western Hemisphere countries remains low–only $1.1 million in 2012. Media spending for East Asia and the Pacific has averaged about $4 million a year.

The overall numbers were reflected in a recent statement from the State Department. The office of the State Department spokesperson, in a press release dated May 3, 2012, reported on various types of media assistance. "Since 2009 we have allocated approximately $300 million for such programs," the release stated.[5]

As the GAO noted in 2005, analyzing trends in USAID and State Department media development projects is complicated. What constitutes a media development project is not always clear, especially an *independent* media development project. Some media development activities are contained in larger democratization or economic or health projects. Some media projects run over long periods of time and may shift their focus as they are renewed. Some are not reported for security reasons.

But some broad trends are known. Media assistance and development work after the fall of the Berlin Wall was concentrated in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. It continues to focus on hot spots of foreign policy attention: Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Eurasia.
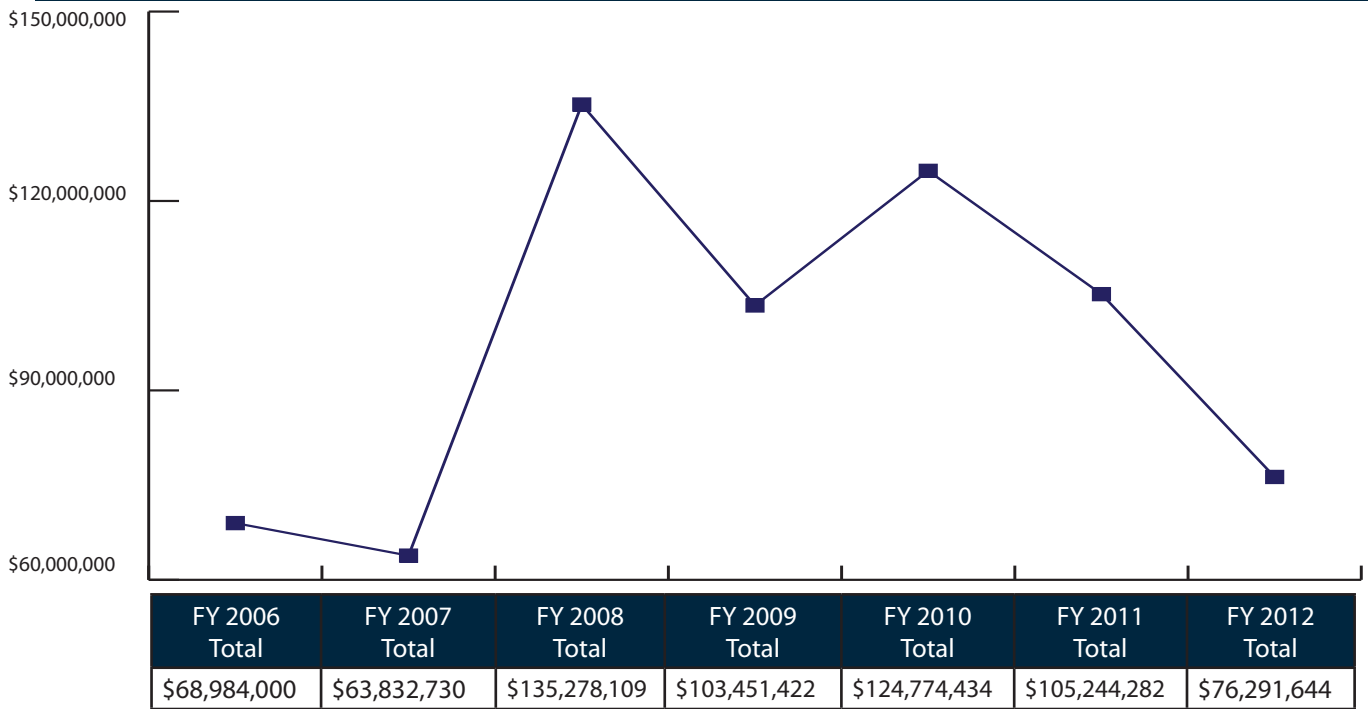
In a foreign operations report submitted to Congress in 2012, USAID stated that it was "active in the planning for or implementation of independent media programs in 46 countries in FY 2011."[6] Analysis of data from spreadsheets of RFPs, RFAs, ASPs, and RSOIs from 2010 through 2012 and to a lesser degree using data from 2008

U.S. Government Spending
Media Freedom and Freedom of Information
FY 2006-FY2012
U.S. Department of State and USAID

FY 2006 Total	FY 2007 Total	FY 2008 Total	FY 2009 Total	FY 2010 Total	FY 2011 Total	FY 2012 Total
$68,984,000	$63,832,730	$135,278,109	$103,451,422	$124,774,434	$105,244,282	$76,291,644

and 2009, shows some developments and trends. Most, but not all, appear to comport with observations made by people who work in the media development field, either as donors or implementers.

Over the last three years, the numbers of projects announced on Grants.gov having components for media assistance, strengthening, or development have peaked and then fallen off: 31 for 2010, 40 for 2011, and 33 for 2012. Meanwhile, projects found to have elements of "media for development" have increased, from 7 to 16 over the same three years.

In 2012, the number of media projects announced by USAID declined. Only seven media development grants were tendered by USAID–four in Europe and Eurasia, one in Cuba, one in MENA and one Global. This compares to 18 in 2011 and 11 in 2010 (The 26 put out by the State Department in 2012 was a small increase over the previous two years.)

The falloff in numbers of announced projects tracks with the diminished spending recorded by the State Department. The numbers of RFPs and RFAs, however, are only a rough gauge of activity, since grants, and especially those from USAID, run for many years and tend to be awarded in cycles. Some missions, sensing a coming decline in funding in 2012, may have worked to get their multi-year projects approved in earlier years.

The State Department's media allocations data shows that spending decreased every year since 2008 in the Europe and Eurasia region. One possible explanation for this is that countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, and Slovakia, with previous media assistance projects, had "graduated " from USAID assistance with their entrance into the European Union. Additionally, foreign assistance shifted toward democratization in the Near East and South and Central Asia. During 2010-2012, projects were announced for Georgia, Ukraine, Macedonia, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey, and in many of those countries media projects were ongoing.

While some observers view the flood of democracy aid to Egypt and Tunisia in the spring of 2011 as a "flavor or the day" approach, the data also show a certain amount of perspicacity on the part of U.S. grantors:

- A $1.2 million human rights and civil society project, which includes media development, for Syria in 2010.

- Democracy and media-building projects in Egypt that date all the way back to at least 2004, according to the GAO.[7]

- A West Bank/Gaza media project titled "Enhancing Palestinian Independent Media" announced in 2010 for $6 million over three years and awarded to Internews, followed by a West Bank/Gaza multi-year youth program including media training announced in June 2012 for $16 million.

Indeed, State Department data shows that funding for Near East projects peaked in 2008 at $42.7 million.

While media development projects in Africa are now gaining momentum, media for development is more prevalent there. In 2011, two-thirds of media for development projects were in Africa. However, media funding numbers from the Department of State and from lists of RFPs and RFAs in Africa are not consistent. The numbers from the State Department show increasing media development funding for Africa–from $8.7 million in 2008 to $14. 6 million in 2010 to $20.2 million in 2012. Indeed, the amount for Africa in 2012 surpasses the allocation for

Europe and Eurasia ($17.8 million.) Yet the number of RFPs and RFAs announced for Africa appears to be relatively low: The active Africa projects announced since 2008 include one in Liberia, one in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), one in the Central African Republic, two offered for Mozambique, and one five-year $69 million regional project (with a small media component) to improve community governance in Chad, Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso, all by USAID.

At the State Department, DRL announced one media project in the Central African Republic, one in sub-Saharan Africa, one in Mali and one Africa-wide. The most likely explanation for the high Africa numbers for the State Department is, as one government official notes, "media for development" and media development tend to be more integrated in Africa than elsewhere.

Even less media development work is being offered in Southeast Asia. IREX Vice President Mark Whitehouse noted that there had been a program in Indonesia that ended three years ago. A search of archived data[8] showed that since 1992 media assistance projects had been run in Indonesia, East Timor, India, the Philippines, Nepal, and Vietnam. But the RFP/RFA lists show nothing new in the past five years in that region except projects in China and Malaysia.

What's the Strategy?

Media development professionals inside and outside government interviewed for this report were asked whether there is a media development strategy, especially at USAID. The answers were mixed. Those who said "Yes, there is a strategy," were mainly talking of the process within countries wherein missions see a role for media assistance as part of the overall development plan. Those who said "no" were thinking about the larger, global, picture, about independent media as an end in itself.

During and following the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy focused on reconstructing the Post-Soviet and Warsaw Pact countries. One of the main deterrents to democracy in those countries was the state-controlled media. So independent media assistance was an integral part of the foreign aid slated for most, if not all, of those countries. Thus it is no surprise that USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau is the only regional geographic bureau with a full-time media expert.

An approach that follows this strategy is the more recent move into the Middle East. As noted earlier, media assistance and development projects were started in some part of the Middle East well before the Arab Spring. Another regional development would appear to be the recent forays into media development in Africa.

The fact that USAID has a media expert in only one of its five regional bureaus seems like a serious deficiency, and could go some distance toward explaining why some of the other regions don't get more media grants.

Within the State Department there are multiple funders of media assistance and development. The Middle East Partnership Initiative, obviously, focuses on the Middle East and has a program officer who works on media. It tends to do big, multi-year, democracy-building projects for one or several countries. Most have some kind of media development element.

Still, since most media grants both at USAID and the State Department are country-based, it raises the question of whether there are alternative approaches. "The health people don't do it this way," said Gerald Hyman, who directed USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance from 2002 to 2007. Part of the reason is that health problems are more regional, but he also said that health programs are more centrally directed. "They make some decisions about where AIDS is the biggest problem, and they put their resources there. They might say to the

rest of the world, 'You have an AIDS problem, but you don't have one as big as Zambia does, so we're putting our money in Zambia because that's where we need to stop the infection'."

While the how and why of the creation of media assistance funding can be explained, there are other issues that could be addressed. The fact that USAID has a media expert in only one of its five regional bureaus seems like a serious deficiency and could go some distance toward explaining why some of the other regions don't get more media grants. Media development projects are created on a country-by-country basis, as media independence is seen as a key element of democracy building. While knowledgeable experts inside and outside government explained their grant-making strategies, one is still left wondering whether independent media development is being neglected.

Pressures from Within and Without

Media development grants aren't created in a vacuum. In fact, they are influenced by such things as presidential initiatives, administration priorities, congressional interest, current events, budget constraints, host-country amenability, and many other forces. "Strategic needs on the ground should dictate the nature of the programs, but currently, allocation decisions are determined by earmarks, presidential initiatives, or diplomatic pressure," wrote three former USAID administrators in an article for Foreign Affairs in 2008. While the influence of earmarks has diminished in recent years, the other elements have not changed much.

Administration Priorities

Congress controls the purse, and the president sets the foreign policy agenda. Within this framework, various administrations have emphasized or de-emphasized media development. It was pushed for post-Soviet Europe after the collapse of communism, and the "freedom agenda"–promoting democracy in other nations–of the George W. Bush years gave it new impetus.

The State Department and USAID Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2007-2012, issued during the Bush years, lists independent media as a key element of civil society to be sustained, developed, and protected. As one of its goals, the plan says the U.S. government will use foreign assistance to "advance media freedom by helping to create and develop independent media outlets and media infrastructure and by providing training on media sector skills … processes, and products, including web-based services."[11]

A similar document, issued by the Obama Administration, titled "2011-2016 Strategic Plan Addendum for the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development" does not cite media protections or media development at all. Its only mention of media is in a section on public diplomacy and outreach by the use of "new media and engagement tools." The document does list climate change, food security, and global health among its priority goals for fiscal year 2012.[12]

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), contains no mention of media development. Its only references to media focus on the use of media and "Media Hubs" to put forth the United States' message and to rapidly respond to erroneous news reports. However, given that many long-term media projects are underway and because media assistance will continue to serve democratic development, the Fiscal Year 2013 Congressional Budget Justification–Foreign Operations devotes a page to what USAID is doing in this area. Recognizing that "a professional and independent fourth estate helps

underpin democracy," it states that USAID was "active in the planning for or implementation of independent media programs in 46 countries in FY 2011, while regional and global programs supported or linked media professionals throughout Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Eurasia, Latin America, and Worldwide."

The report adds that since the early 1990s USAID missions have been integrating information and communications technologies (ICT) into media programs. Current media programs include Internet and multi-media training for journalists, training for bloggers, creation and use of databases, support for multi-media platforms, media use of cellphones, and legal support for new media, the report states.[13] Much of this may come from the emphasis of the Obama Administration on use of digital communications

Mission Budget

The amount of money allocated for media assistance varies greatly by country. Country budgets are set based on what can and should be done to assist overall development, and some areas are assessed as needing more support than others. The setting of country budgets, which depend partly on the overall foreign aid budget but also on policy considerations and congressional input, is more top down than bottom up.

In the State Department's hierarchical categorization of aid activities, "media freedom" and "freedom of information" are among two aid categories under "civil society." The latter is one of four areas to be strengthened under "governing justly and democratically," which in turn is just one of seven broader areas for which aid programs are devised. The others are peace and security, economic development, education and social services, environment, health, and humanitarian assistance. Media freedom and freedom of information are a part of civil society development, which is part of an even larger goal of governing justly and democratically.

Media development programs face various challenges. Traditional media, especially print media, is expensive, requiring office space, computer equipment, printing presses, paper, a distribution network, reporters, editors, photographers, and business staff. The same may be said for radio and television. All run several critical risks: The physical plant can be destroyed by enemies, the business may fail, or the enterprise may be politically captured by a ruler or ruling party rendering it less than independent. "If you do enough of that you say maybe we shouldn't be in the newspaper business because it's expensive and there are too many uncertainties and unintended consequences," Hyman said.

Money for media development competes with all of the other possible uses for aid money–health, agriculture, legislature enablement, infrastructure, education, and more. "The ambassador walks in and says yeah, but I just met so and so, and they'd got a great idea for a radio station, and I damned well think we ought to support it," Hyman said. "So there are all these exogenous things like earmarks and ambassadorial views and foreign policy considerations that affect the outcome. So it's not as clean or rational as you would want."[14]

Media Experts

A country or topic may or may not have a media advocate at USAID. The number of professional media experts based in Washington, DC, is low–just five. One works in the Europe and Eurasia bureau; two in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance; and two in the Office of Transition Initiatives. However, often in its overseas offices, USAID has staff hired locally who have a media background.

People inside and outside government say there is no question that it is useful to have a media development advocate at the table when a country's development program is being discussed. They say that the presence of a media expert is certainly one factor that explains the historically robust number of media programs in Europe and Eurasia.

Flavor of the Day

Whether it's a slow shift of focus away from more traditional areas of media assistance such as Eastern Europe and toward new areas of interest such as the Middle East and Africa, or Internet censorship, there is no question that shifts in events can occasion media development projects.

This can be problematic, however, when large amounts of money are quickly thrown into countries whose events become "the flavor of the day." First, this ad hoc approach to media assistance raises questions about media development strategies. Second, experts say, the rush to spend money to solve problems could result in a certain amount of waste.

An example: The events in Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere that came to be known as Arab Spring began in December 2010. On March 8, 2011, a new grant availability was posted by USAID on Grants.gov. Called Egypt Transition Support project, it was for $65 million and was a call for ideas and proposals to do work in Egypt to

improve civil society on the way to democracy. It called for "innovative strategies for the use of print, broadcast, and electronic media." Ten days later, the Middle East Partnership Initiative advertised a $20 million project called "Tunisia: Supporting a Democratic Transition."

 "So right now," said Hyman, "if you are Tunisia you can call your shots. And is there an ability to use this money efficiently? Probably not. If you were doing this in a rational investor kind of way you'd say, let's let Tunisia settle down a bit and look at it long term."[15]

Indeed, a USAID inspector general's audit of the $65 million Egypt project says that USAID could not allocate $20 million of the money and passed it over to MEP.. Among the projects that were undertaken, one, charged to do get-out-the-vote campaigning and registration and election monitoring, spent more than $500,000 without keeping any records, the IG audit said.[16]

Earmarks

In the more infamous days of congressional earmarking, legislators tucked projects in the federal budget designed to benefit their home states or address some special interest of theirs. Federal office buildings, bridges and highways, and even manufacturing contracts were thus funded by the federal government. That kind of line-item, grantee-specific earmarking has diminished considerably in the clamor for tighter budgets.

In the media assistance world, perhaps because of limited budgets and because little media assistance lends itself to brick-and-mortar infrastructure, that kind of old-school earmarking was harder to come by. But it was not out of the question. In 2007, for instance, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, was criticized in a TV ad for earmarking $8.3 million in foreign aid funds to buy MP3 players to be distributed to the citizens of Afghanistan. The players were to contain messages to enhance participation in the upcoming national election. Reportedly manufactured in China, the devices were to be shipped by a Lexington, Kentucky, supplier. The contract was obtained by the firm's chief lobbyist, who had been McConnell's top staffer.

These days, however, congressional earmarks tend to be more policy-driven. This should not be surprising, because congressmen run for office to advance their policy views, and one way to do that is to earmark funds in furtherance of a favorite policy. For the FY 2012 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Program Appropriations Act, Congress wrote in a line item to spend $23 million for Internet freedom activities,

for example. So in May 2012 the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs announced a Joint Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) for proposals for projects that support Internet freedom under the governing justly and democratically program objective.

It's worth noting that earmarked projects don't go through the lengthy mission-centered vetting process required of others. More important, rarely does Congress authorize extra dollars to fund the projects, so the money must come from the USAID or State budget, and thus from other projects. "A little bit of pain for everyone else," said one government official familiar with the process. "Earmarks are not a helpful thing, frankly, though there are far fewer of them than there used to be."

Thematic Trends

Among media development grants there are some thematic constants. Surveying the grants from 2008 to 2012, it is evident that almost every year there are some grants that support journalism capacity building, work to improve legal enabling environments, create journalism fellowships and university partnerships, and promote Internet freedom.

Pure Media Development

Some of the projects cataloged were purely devoted to development, assistance, or support of independent media. Here, for example, is a description of a FY 2009 media-only project for Rwanda sponsored by the Millennium Challenge Corporation:

> This project will focus on: i) building the capacity and skills of media owners, managers, editors, professional media associations and individual journalists in order to increase the sustainability and professionalism of private media outlets; and ii) establishing two independent community radio stations.

Few of the projects, however, were created solely to assist or develop independent media. Indeed, most were designed to broadly enhance civil society or promote democracy and governance, with media improvement functioning as a means to those ends. Some media experts interviewed for this paper believe that the development of media as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself is a discernible trend over the years. "Subtracting Afghanistan and Iraq, it seems that we are seeing fewer large stand-alone media development projects," Whitehouse said.

One media professional made the point that a lot of the media work done in the Middle East is accomplished under the auspices of the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which tends to create large, multi-faceted projects. Thus unlike the pure media development projects done in Europe and Eurasia, media development implementers typically only have a piece of a MEPI project.

Here is a description of one $2 million MEPI project in FY 2011 for Egypt:

> Through this grant opportunity, MEPI intends to support Egyptian civil society, including civil companies (law firms, consulting firms, trade associations, media companies), women's groups,

and professional associations that are committed to building democracy and undertaking reform. Funding is available for projects that increase political openness and democratic processes, create new economic opportunities, enhance access to and quality of education systems, and/or empower women.

Using the data at hand and the project descriptions therein, it was difficult to spot a clear historic trend away from pure media development. However, it appears that the highest number of pure media development proposals were in FY 2011.

Digital Media and ICT

Digital is everywhere. "In terms of the work we do, I don't think there is any project out there that doesn't have a strong digital component," said Marjorie Rouse, senior vice president for programs at Internews. Even if you are doing community radio in a remote area, there is a digital overlay and almost certainly a mobile overlay."[17]

Most media experts inside and outside the U.S. government who were interviewed noted this trend. "Digital is big," said Meg Gaydosik, senior media advisor for USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau. "Every media project these days contains digital. Digital could advance to the exclusion of everything else ... but you still need trained journalists to make sense of the data."[18]

Take for example a 2010 USAID $5.7 million project designed for "strengthening independent media" in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

> It is expected that activities implemented under this project would contribute to a safer environment for BiH journalists to work, strengthen alternative sources of information, increase the role of supporting institutions to enhance the work of professional journalists, raise principles of regulation and self-regulations to higher level, and increase citizens' awareness of the importance of independent journalists. The project is not intended to work with traditional media, and thus will not provide standard journalism training, business advice, or otherwise seek to reduce political influence on traditional media. Rather, the project focuses on alternative sources of information and citizens' knowledge.

The RFPs and RFAs show an increased mention of information and communications technologies (ICT) over time, and Whitehouse said that he sees a trend towards more technological assistance projects.[19] In 2011, USAID proposed a $7.5 million project devoted solely to training ICT professionals–"policy makers, regulators, service providers, managers, entrepreneurs, technical workers and advisers, project managers and practitioners"–from developing countries around the world. A 2012 project to increase dialogue and information flow in Cuba speaks of "new uses of information and communication technologies." A 2012 proposal for Macedonia wants to "provide information or share best practices using IT, websites, conventional media and social networking … Support innovative use of social media to support media issues." Indeed, in 2012, nearly all proposals, whether media related or not, have some component relating to the increase of ICTs for message dissemination or for embracing of new technologies.

One other digital development dating to the mid-2000s is the spending of U.S. funds to promote Internet freedom, and to counteract the actions of other nations to inhibit it. DRL's Patricia Davis said that all told the U.S. government spends roughly $100 million a year on Internet freedom projects. Many started in earlier years are continuing, and not all are announced on Grants.gov. In January 2010 DRL announced an RFP for an Internet freedom project entitled "Promoting Freedom of Expression and the Free Flow of Information through Technology and Access." In December 2010, for instance, DRL and the Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs jointly announced a solicitation of interest for an $8 million Internet freedom program. In 2008, DRL launched a $13.8 million effort to use technology to combat repressive measures designed to stifle freedom of expression on the Internet. Some of these projects are global in nature, while others target countries that practice Internet repression such as China and Iran.

Investigative Journalism

In its 2012 *Empowering Independent Media* report, CIMA[20] noted that the support from all donors for investigative reporting constituted only about 2 percent of all media development funding. Because of the vagaries in the funding for components of media grants examined for this report, no such calculation was possible for U.S. government-only spending. But the lack of investigative projects announced by USAID and the State Department was certainly notable, and was similarly meager year after year: In all of 2010, 2011, and 2012, there was only one proposal, a three-year project from USAID in FY 2011 for $3 million, titled "Regional Investigative Journalism Network," that was fully devoted to investigative journalism. It was awarded to

Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and the International Center for Journalists to support investigative journalism centers and newsrooms in 14 Eastern European and former Soviet countries. Media experts note that investigative reporting training is, at times, tucked into larger independent media projects. CIMA's review found two other projects in 2011, two in 2010, and three in 2012 that had some investigative journalism component.. But these components tend not to be large; and the picture is complicated by the fact that, as noted previously, some investigative journalists' organizations will not accept support from government donors.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is now a requisite for all media (and other) projects. A DRL guide defines an M&E plan as a "systematic and objective approach or process for monitoring project performance toward its objectives over time." It lists among the desired components: needs, activities, indicators, pathways, impacts, assumptions, external factors, inputs, outputs, and outcomes.[21]

In 2012, USAID announced 16 projects that used media or communications in at least part of the program to achieve their goals.

Whether the emphasis on monitoring and evaluation has increased over time is hard to discern, but some media development experts think it has: "You really have to show results based on measurable outcomes," said one. "If you can't measure it it's not worth doing."

Hyman argues that an emphasis on measurability dates back at least two decades.[22] "I think it's an exaggeration to say that looking for results is a new concept, but the language is new," he said. "Now you hear talk about 'impacts' and 'results orientation' and 'indicators' … There's more emphasis on that than 20 years ago."[23]

Media for Development

CIMA staff surveyed RFPs and RFAs on Grants.gov for three years, 2010 to 2012, to try to find aid programs that made use of media or communications to help achieve results. That use of media is often called "media for

development" or "development communications." There were seven such projects in 2010, 16 in 2011, and 16 in 2012. Even as spending for media freedom and freedom of information has decreased over these years, it appears that the media for development sector is healthy and growing. The main use of media for development has been at USAID.

"We're seeing a lot more projects where media is part of something larger," Whitehouse said. "Media for development, things like that. In general, behavior change, messaging–for these projects what matters most is reaching the audience. The problem is that some people think it is media development, and they get lumped in together." Said a government official familiar with media practices, "The large majority of U.S. funding in this area goes to media as a means."

In 2012, USAID announced 16 projects that used media or communications in at least part of the program to achieve their goals. The total value of the projects was more than $271 million; it was $391 million in 2011. The dollar value of the media portions only, however, are impossible to ascertain. In some cases, development communications is the bulk of the proposal; for others it is only a small part. For instance, a $50 million project to strengthen HIV protection in Nigeria in 2011 gives as its purpose:

> To increase the adoption of safer sexual behaviors among most-at-risk populations in
> Nigeria, to reduce new HIV infections. The new award(s) will also support mass media (at the
> state-level), community mobilization, interpersonal communications, and complement and
> coordinate with other USG-funded partners.

Some projects' entire focus is communications, such as the $113 million C-Change program. (See Appendix B, page 35) Many independent media advocates contend that much of this communication for change is messaging. Local media are paid to run health messages or trained to produce their own public service programming. This is quite different from encouraging independent journalism.

"Donor support to media through the purchase of airtime in Mali, the DRC, Indonesia, and elsewhere provides content created by outsiders, reinforcing pay-for-play structures that are antithetical to the free media system they are trying to achieve," wrote Tara Susman-Peña in a report for CIMA published in October 2012, *Making Media Development More Effective*.[24] "…[I]t just needs to be recognized that use of media as a means may come at the expense of media as an end," wrote Andrew Green in a CIMA paper in 2009, *Challenges to U.S. Government Support for Media Development*.[25]

Transparency

In Secretary Clinton's 2010 direction-setting QDDR, she writes that the State Department and USAID must "commit to transparency" to defend their results, to hold themselves accountable and show that their programs deliver. That will require, she states, "that we further open up our books and records to allow others to see and judge for themselves."[26] Yet full transparency has yet to be achieved in the granting of funds for USAID and State media-related proposals.

The analysis of RFPs, RFAs, APSs, and RSOIs shows, while the bulk of proposals are announced for bids or statements of interest on Grants.gov, some are not. They may not be announced because they take place in sensitive countries or regions. Aid workers have been arrested or even killed while working in foreign countries, and making the names of their companies and the nature of their work public puts them at greater risk. One U.S. government official referred to the secrecy as a "conundrum, in that we are doing great stuff and cannot talk about it."[27]

After a project is announced, there is no public record to show how the project was ultimately designed or awarded. As cited earlier, a USAID inspector general's report revealed the changes that occurred in the $65 million Egypt Transition Support Grants program (2011) after it was announced. But this information was not obtainable through Grants.gov or other grant-machinery databases.

Top executives at both Internews and IREX, two large and well-known independent media developers, were asked if they knew of a way to learn what happened to projects they did not bid on. They said they had no timely way to get that information and that they normally learn who won what bid by "word of mouth" or the "word on the street." Said IREX's Whitehouse: "It should be public information, but it's impossible to find out in a timely manner."[28]

In terms of the big picture, the State Department is continuing to improve its Foreign Assistance Dashboard, an Internet site where viewers can see the per-country expenditures for democracy, human rights, and governance, and its components, which are: rule of law and human rights, good governance, political competition and consensus-building, and civil society. Wouldn't it be useful for those in the media development community to see a breakout for media development under civil society. The data does exist.[29]

Recommendations

- Encourage more transparency. Information should be provided in a timely way about who won the grant, how its project or project parts were enacted, and how much money was involved. Improve the Foreign Assistance Dashboard to break out media development spending.

- Adopt a more strategic approach–rather than "flavor of the day"–to address the independent media development needs in core problem regions. One way to approach this would be to take a hard look at how USAID's health programs are designed to see if those approaches can be transferred to the media arena.

- Put a designated media specialist, even if only part-time, in every USAID bureau to be sure that media is incorporated into as many democracy and governance programs as possible

- In the aid process, treat media as an important part also of economic and overall social development, and as well as a part of governance and civil society.

Appendix A: How Grants are Made and Tracked

USAID

At USAID, projects are created to aid country development. While some projects are regional or even global in scope, most focus on development within a single country and are the work of the USAID mission within that country. Any proposed media development project must align with the mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy, or CDCS, a five-year plan for country development assistance. The CDCS itself may take up to one year or more to produce,[1] and involves numerous levels of consultation within USAID.

The CDCS enumerates development objectives, intermediate results to be achieved, and states how the objectives may be achieved with U.S. government aid.[2] If, for instance, an objective is a more accountable government, an intermediate result may be a more informed citizenry. And a component of that may be increased access to independent and balanced sources of information. To serve that goal, a plan–also known as a media program description–may be laid out for improving the country's media sector and describes how U.S.-funded activities could do that.

The media program description is usually produced after an assessment of the sector is done, either by a team from the USAID mission or by a team hired by the mission. The assessment and the creation of a program description may take up to six to nine months to complete, and various areas of each mission are engaged in the program description review. The process is complex because the program description must include a plan for monitoring and evaluation, an analysis of sustainability of desired outcomes, the project's impact on populations, its social soundness, an even the environmental effect of the project.

The near-final project plan may receive more feedback and may be again modified before it is authorized and a budget is set–a process that can take additional time. Finally, if the project makes sense to the mission and to Washington, it is turned into an RFP or RFA or even RSOI (USAID mainly does RFAs) to be advertised on Grants.gov. In simple language, all of those are calls for proposals so the project can be awarded to one of the competing applicants. After all proposals are received, the review and selection process commences. More recently, USAID has made a concerted effort to directly fund more local organizations to accomplish the work.

From beginning to end, the project -writing process can take a year, more or less, and the award to a bidder can take an additional six months. One reason the process is so lengthy is that USAID development projects usually run from three to five years and cost many millions of dollars.

State Department

There are numerous agencies within the State Department that may award media grants. Some of the more active ones are the embassies and the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which focuses on democracy and civil society building in the MENA region. In terms of projects announced each year, the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) is the busiest.

DRL's grant making process is notably speedier than USAID's. While USAID creates multi-year development projects that may cost tens of millions of dollars, DRL does smaller projects of a shorter timeframe, often one year. These are designed to meet more immediate needs.

Every year Congress allocates approximately $60 to $70 million to DRL to be spent on human rights, labor, and democracy work globally. The projects may be country-based or thematic, such as promotion of Internet freedom, depending on where there is need. Projects typically range from about $500,000 to $3 million. While DRL plans its spending, it is understood that some of its projects will have to be done quickly. DRL does not have missions like USAID, but it has staff in about a dozen countries. Its Washington staff works closely with human rights officers at the embassies to design programs and review proposals.

Most of DRL's proposed projects are announced on Grants.gov as Request for Proposals (RFP) or as a Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI). While the RFPs may be quite long, the statements of interest can be as short as a two-page concept paper, leading to full proposals with budgets. After several more steps, the award is made by DRL's assistant secretary and the director of foreign assistance. After more paperwork, the grant award is finally approved and money will be available to the implementer to be drawn upon.[3]

The process takes several months for most projects; DRL can act more quickly in the event of disasters or emergencies, for example, to help bail out a jailed journalist or rebuild a bombed-out radio station. "For example, if we are looking at a crackdown in media in country X, we design a program to address that," said Patricia Davis, director of the Office of Global Programs at DRL. "Whereas USAID is [asking] , how can we build up the institutions of media including strong business management, how do we sustain newspapers or radio? That's not our focus–it is, they are shutting down newspapers now, what are we going to do about it?"[4]

With regard to both USAID and State, the agreement reached between the agency funder and the implementer of the project can take several forms. "Contracts" tend to be very prescriptive. "Grants" are written more broadly and allow greater independence by the implementer. "Cooperative Agreements," which may be tightly or more loosely written, are something of a hybrid between a contract and a grant. While USAID projects tend to run three to five years, DRL's are usually capped at two.

Reforms and Tracking

For many years, tracking how much money was being spent on media assistance–or any other foreign aid for that matter–was difficult as no centralized reporting and tracking system existed.

That changed in 2006, when Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice announced a reform of foreign assistance. Rice put USAID and the aid-granting portions of the State Department under one accountability roof to more clearly serve foreign policy strategy.

To track foreign assistance spending, all projects were classified under an elaborate system of numbered objectives, programs, elements, and sub-elements. Media Sustainability, for instance, was listed as a sub-element under the element Media Freedom and Freedom of Information, which fell under the program Civil Society, which fell under the objective for Governing Justly and Democratically. While many aspects of the Rice system dissolved under the Obama administration, the budgetary tracking system survives. It is administered by the State Department's Office of Foreign Assistance Resources. CIMA requests and receives the data at the regional level annually.

1. Interviews with government officials, June 8, 2012 and October 16, 2012.

2. USAID, *ADS Chapter 201: Planning*, March 23, 2012.

3. U.S. Department of State, Grants Process Overview, www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c23187.htm.

4. Patricia Davis, interview with the author, October 24, 2012.

Appendix B: Country and Regional Projects, 2008-2012

The following are from RFPs and RFAs soliciting project bids that were collected and analyzed by CIMA:

2008

Rwanda: USAID put $2 million into a media strengthening project in Rwanda that was part of a Millennium Challenge Corporation project. Also, the State Department's DRL made approximately $600,000 available to bolster media reform and freedom in Senegal.

North Korea: A project was announced by DRL for $1 million to increase the flow of information into, within, and out of North Korea.

Cuba: A $4.45 million civil society and human rights project was announced. Part of it was delineated as "Independent Media/Breaking the Information Blockade."

Iran: A $20 million civil society initiative was announced by USAID, which was to include a freedom of information portion aimed at using new media, training journalists, increasing public appreciation of independent media and researching the Persian online community. Meanwhile, a human rights and democratization project was announced for Iran by DRL. Internet freedom and anti-censorship initiatives comprised one of its four parts.

China: DRL requested statements of interest to see what kinds of proposals would emerge to foster democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and other elements in China. The proposed funding for the package was $13.4 million.

Serbia: An $8 million multi-year to support the transition of the Serbian media sector was announced by USAID. One important focus of the project was to sustain the health and vitality of independent media outlets.

Moldova: USAID announced a $3.15 million project to improve and strengthen the network of regional TV stations in Moldova. It was a partner with existing media development efforts.

Others: Other smaller media assistance, strengthening, and development initiatives were announced in 2008 for Turkey, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Russia, the "Arab World," and the "Muslim World." Media strengthening

work was included in a $25 million democracy program for Iraq, but it was not clear how much of the funds would go to the media projects.

2009

At least two media projects were launched in Africa. One, titled Liberia Civil Society and Media Capacity, Advocacy and Leadership program, was funded for $11 million for five years. About $3.85 million of that was to be devoted to media development and strengthening. The grant was awarded to IREX. The other, part of a multi-country democracy building effort, was a project funded for $750,000 in the Central African Republic (CAR) to use radio "as a tool to build civil society capacity." The solicitation stipulated that radio should be used to create a dialogue on such issues as human rights, democracy, and the looming 2010 national elections. It was not clear, however, how much of that would be angled toward independent media development.

The $1 million North Korea project launched in 2008 was re-advertised for $1 million in 2009. 2009 was also noteworthy for a $700,000 solicitation by DRL to support media organizations in Lebanon to cover the 2010 municipal elections, and for a $40 million project for Post National Election Democracy Initiatives in Iraq, including some support for the "professionalism, sustainability, and editorial independence of Iraqi media." At that time, however, Iraq media projects were winding down.[30]

2010

Media development proposals were concentrated regionally in Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and Eurasia.

Africa: Only one solicitation was tendered for Africa, a $9.5 million USAID five-year project awarded to Internews to increase the audience reach, the professionalism, and the sustainability of media in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Cuba: The State Department announced a $445,000 project on information technology training.

Ecuador: A civil society project was announced for $2.58 million over three years. Some portion of that was to be for media strengthening.

China: As a follow-on to a project launched in 2008, DRL again announced for statements of interest to address rule of law, civil society, good governance, and other issues including media freedom in China. The total amount available was $16.4 million.

Malaysia: DRL announced a project that would devote approximately $500,000 to promoting media and Internet freedom in Malaysia.

But the bulk of the media projects, 22 of 31 in 2010, went to three regions. In Southwest Asia USAID and DRL tendered seven proposals for Afghanistan and one for Pakistan. For Europe and Eurasia, eight solicitations were announced, four for Georgia alone, one for Bosnia, one for Azerbaijan, and one for Turkey and Armenia and one for Armenia alone. There were six proposals in the Middle East, three MENA-wide and one each for Iraq, Syria, and the West Bank/Gaza.

Afghanistan: Undoubtedly, the most noteworthy media development project of 2010 was the Afghan Media Development and Employment Project, known as AMDEP. It was allocated $38 million, broken into six parts, of which Internews was awarded five, worth about $22 million. Much of that work was to follow on what Internews had already done there. The sixth part known as Mobile Khabar, worth up to $16 million, was designed to give Afghans audio access to news and information via mobile phone. The bid was awarded but later cancelled due to what USAID said were budget issues.[31]

Pakistan: In FY 2010 a $3.7 million project was announced for Pakistan from which about $2.2 million was to fund professional partnerships with American journalists.

Georgia: Following the Georgia-Russian war of 2008, U.S. and European aid flowed into Georgia to ensure its continuing democratic development. Following on one $600,000 grant in 2009 to improve public discourse in Georgia, USAID and the State Department launched several more projects there aimed at civil society and media in 2010. The first was a $4 million extension of the public discourse grant. Another, for $12.9 million tendered by USAID, sought to improve the professionalism of journalists and strengthen their legal protections. Known as G-MEDIA, it was awarded to IREX to implement over four years. The U.S. embassy in Tbilisi started three Georgian media partnership programs: one an opportunity for a U.S. academic institution to partner with the Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management for three years, the second a two-year or more partnership joining American and Georgian media outlets. The third promoted training of Georgian journalists, including investigative training, at U.S. media outlets.

Middle East Both USAID and the State Department announced projects for the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region. One, from USAID, for $12 million, was titled Regional NGO/Media Development Progra.. Another, from the Middle East Partnership Initiative for $2.4 million, was to help local civil society organizations learn to use new media. A third, from the State Department's undersecretary for public diplomacy and public affairs announced a $4 million grant to develop and distribute Arab language TV programs to improve relations between the Muslim world and the United States. In 2010 DRL announced a $1.25 million human rights and civil society project for Syria that was to focus mainly on development of traditional media. Another project, titled "Enhancing Palestinian Independent Media," was proposed for West Bank/Gaza for $6 million.

2011

The fiscal year 2011 was a big one for media development proposals, with 40 media development projects announced, and not just because of the war in Afghanistan. As in 2010, much of the focus of media development activity was focused on Europe and Eurasia (eight projects), the Near East (seven projects) and South and Central Asia (nine projects). Seven media development projects were announced as "global" in nature. The highlights included:

Near East: 2011 was the year of Arab Spring, and it saw the quick launch of two huge democracy projects, one for $65 million in Egypt and one for $20 million in Tunisia. These projects have been addressed elsewhere in this paper, as they had small media components. Also, both the Middle East Partnership Initiative and DRL announced two projects totaling more than $14 million, of which media assistance was one small part.

South and Central Asia: One USAID project, for conflict mitigation in Kyrgyzstan, listed for $9 million over three years, had some media components, but it is unclear for how much. Another for Kyrgyzstan, funded by DRL for $1.38 million, was to develop TV and radio and print news sources there. At least five media projects were funded for Afghanistan. Three from DRL were to create university partnerships in journalism at $1 million eac.. One from the U.S. embassy in Kabul for $5 million was to create a media pool at the Afghan Parliament; the second from the embassy, for $50 million, was to "expand media engagement" and "counter extremist voices," among other things.

Africa: One ambitious media project was tendered for Africa. Created for Mozambique, it was an $8 million project aimed at strengthening independent media outlets and community radio and training in basic

journalism and investigative reporting. It was sponsored by USAID and awarded to IREX as a four-year program. Later in 2011 it was extended into a five-year, $10 million projec..

Europe and Eurasia: Projects with at least some media part were proposed for the Ukraine, Russia, the North Caucasus, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Macedoni.. One Ukraine project, all for media development, was awarded to Internews for $14 million over five years. Meanwhile, the Belarus civil society and media project, which was a follow-on to years of non-competed media work in that country was competitively bid out in 2011 for $12 million over five years.

China: One project, from DRL, was a $16.5 million request for statements of interest to enhance transparency and open government information, press freedom, media reform, and journalism in that countr.. IREX was awarded a small part of the project.[32]

Mongolia: Fiscal year 2011 also saw the launch of two initiatives for Mongolia. One was a $450,000 for elections engagement. One component was the use of ICT for the spread of information. A second project, for $7 million, was to support judicial reform and combat corruption. It was unclear how significant any media component would be.

Cuba: In mid-2011 DRL announced a $1.2 million project to help journalists network and improve their professionalism, but also to support writers, bloggers, artists and musicians in their quest for more freedom of expression. It was unclear how much of the project would be for what is traditionally thought of as independent media development. A second, from USAID for $6 million was to facilitate the "free flow of information" on the island.

2012

Thirty-three media development grants were announced in 2012. In terms of solicitations, the difference in numbers between USAID and the State Department is significant–seven for USAID and 26 for the State Department. The low number from USAID may be due to the cyclical nature of USAID grant making, and the tightening of the USAID budget. All told, seven projects were proposed for Europe and Eurasia, adding to or extending those already running there. In Africa, there were three substantial media assistance and

development projects already running in 2012: a five-year program for Liberia started in 2009, a five-year project in the DRC started in 2010, and a five-year, $10 million project with IREX in Mozambique that started in 2011.

The big news of FY 2012 arguably was a $23 million grant to promote and enhance Internet freedom. It was jointly sponsored by DRL and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Grants of up to $5 million were to go to proposals for anti-censorship technology, secure communications, and digital safety training. It was aimed at China, the Near East, Asia, Latin America and Africa. It was essentially a follow-on to a $13.8 million Internet freedom project launched in 2008 by DRL and a $5 million one tendered by DRL in 2010.

Only seven media solicitations were announced in 2012 by USAID. One was a bundle of grants worth up to $30 million for development work in a variety of countries, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Nicaragua, Senegal and Ukraine, and they all had some media component.. In Bosnia and Macedonia, the program would lend support to traditional and social media to enhance public debate; for Ukraine, the proposal sought to prevent backsliding in the media sector; for Senegal, a national reading campaign using TV and radio was proposed; the proposal for Nicaragua was mainly educational with some independent media support.

Macedonia: USAID also announced a separate $1.525 project to reduce the vulnerability of journalists and provide for more collective support and friendlier laws.

West Bank/Gaza: USAID announced a five-year, $16 million project to expand educational and leadership opportunities for youth. The project was to coordinate with USAID's Democracy, Rights and Governance center's media program to involve more youth in TV and radio, produce more programming aimed at young women, and create more ICT training for youth. It was a follow on to the $6 million Palestinian independent media project of 2010.

Cuba: USAID also sponsored a $3 million project to run for up to three years in Cuba. Its purpose was to spread across the island the work of a small cadre of independent Cuban journalists who are normally published only overseas.

The State Department was much more active than USAID in 2012 in announcing proposals for media work. Twenty-six such project were counted by CIMA staff, sponsored by such agencies as the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, DRL, and various U.S. embassies. The projects were mainly focused on South and Central Asia, the Near East, and Africa.

South and Central Asia: Six proposals were tendered for Afghanistan and three for Pakistan., The ones for Afghanistan included everything from media strengthening to programming. Two of the Pakistan projects were for university partnerships with Pakistani universities in the area of media studies; a third was to help digitize the Pakistani Broadcasting Corporation.

Near East: The Middle East partnership Initiative and DRL announced three democracy-building projects aimed at several countries in the MENA region and all had at least a small media assistance component. The U.S. mission to Tunisia also announced a plan to spend $250,000 to create a one-year master's program in investigative reporting in Tunis. A project in Iraq was to improve the legal framework for media.

Africa: The U.S. Embassy in Mali announced grants of up to $250,000 to, among other things, build the communications capacity of the Malian people, their media, and their government. DRL announced a human rights and rule of law project for the Great Lakes region of Africa, which includes the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Central African Republic. About $650,000 was to be available for part of the project dealing women and journalism.

Europe and Eurasia: The U.S. embassy in Tbilisi announced a $150,000 one to two-year project to assist the Georgian University Journalism Program to refurbish and run its media lab. The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv announced a $400,000 project to create partnerships between Ukrainian and U.S. media outlets.

North Korea: DRL announced the availability of $200,000 to $400,000 to increase information flow into, within, and out of the Republic of North Korea. A State Department official said the programs support radio outlets based in South Korea that broadcast into the North. Similar projects were launched in 2008, 2009, and 2011.[33]

Appendix C: Methodology

To conduct the majority of research for this report, CIMA began with data solicited via Grants.gov, the government's online database that lists the publicly available requests for proposals, applications, and statements of interest for government-funded projects since 2007. Searches via Grants.gov can be limited by federal government department, funding categories (grants, cooperative agreements, etc.), and solicitation status (open, closed, and archived opportunities. Search terminology for the purposes of this report was limited only by one element: results from the Department of State and USAID, the two government agencies tasked with media development as a component of their international aid.

The search contained solicitations from each entity's various bureaus and missions around the globe, yielding hundreds of results. Each solicitation was analyzed in depth to extract any references to media in its components and sub-components. Solicitations contained two types of media projects: those whose entire proposal was designed only for media development (such as a journalists training seminar), and those that included media development as a line item within a large proposal (such as a project in a given country aiming to strengthen civil society, rule of law, and media freedom). Each type of solicitation is included in this report.

Once solicitations dealing with media were captured from Grants.gov, each was categorized as either a "media development" project or a "media for development" project. A "media development" project is defined as a project to enhance or build capacity for traditional media or new media technologies (such as Internet censorship circumvention). "Media for development" projects are defined as those using media to achieve other development goals (such as mobile messaging to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS). It was important to capture media for development within this research, given recent funding trends, but also to distinguish it from development of independent media.

Within this report, the term "pure media development" is used to refer either to projects dealing with media only (rather than as part of a larger solicitation) or as distinct from "media for development" projects.

Solicitations were cataloged by funding opportunity title (meaning the title of each solicitation), country/region, open date (when data became publicly available for bidding), total program funding, funds delineated for media components (if included), and category of funding (training, freedom of expression, etc.). CIMA's spreadsheets

also included specific project descriptions and analysis of monitoring and evaluation reporting requirements within in each solicitation.

The data on Grants.gov provides insight into where and what types of programs are funded, and most solicitations include a budgetary proposal. However, these solicitations are far from definite. They tell only half of the story–where the money *could* go. It is the State Department that provides actual expenditures at the end of each fiscal year and breaks down the regions to which funds were supplied. These numbers complemented CIMA's analysis of RFPs, RFAs, and RSOIs to help determine the overall trends in media development support by the U.S. government.

Endnotes

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