

Nevertheless, positive signs are emerging, such as efforts to professionalize certain media (written as well as broadcast), the gradual awakening of the state media, and the appearance of journalism and communication schools.



TOGO

The panel shed new light on the difficulties, and also the progress, of the Togolese press, whose legitimate ambition is to participate, in its own way, in the effort of national development and the strengthening of democracy. Indeed, despite the existence of pioneering legal texts, the Togolese press remains hindered by its initial failings during the early 1990s: extreme politicization of the media, poor information collection and processing practices, amateurism and dubious business practices in media management, and lack of state aid.

Nevertheless, positive signs are emerging, such as efforts to professionalize certain media (written as well as broadcast), the gradual awakening of the state media, and the appearance of journalism and communication schools.

Development of young democracies cannot be achieved without a free, independent, responsible, and well-managed press. If in the 1990s the liberalization of the press was, among other things, granted under popular pressure, the government would be well advised today to put the Togolese press on the track toward professionalization in appropriate ways, such as substantial increases in state aid to the media, rebates on the cost of materials and electronic equipment, grants for journalism schools, and facilitation of an organizational structure of the advertising industry.

While there is certainly impetus for the growth of the Togolese media, 2012 saw an almost across-the-board regression in each objective, save for its supporting institutions, which the panel rated as having experienced modest improvement. For all the positive signs that can be discerned, it must be said that the overarching trend was negative, with the Togolese media requiring much work to begin the long road to sustainability.

TOGO AT A GLANCE

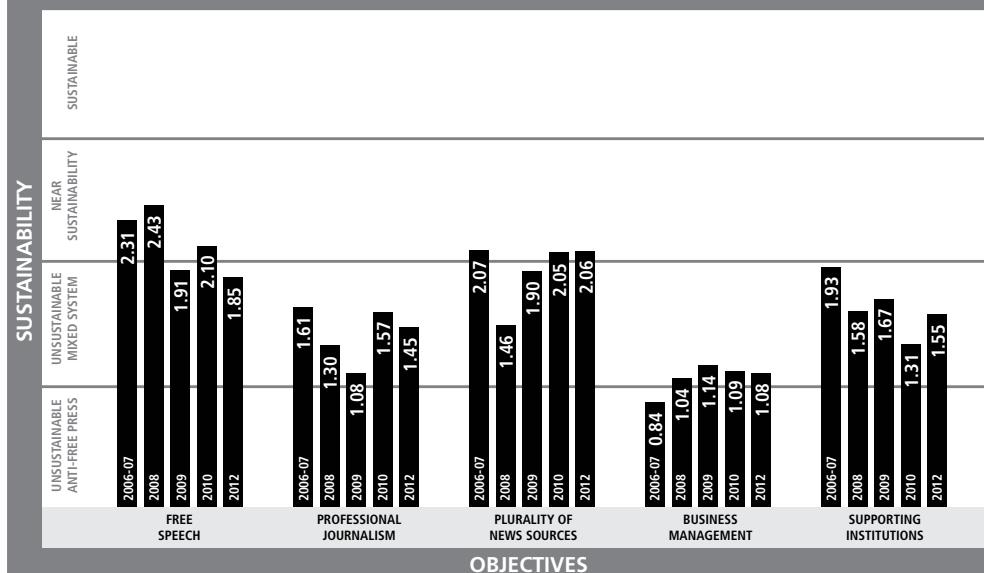
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 6,961,049 (2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Lomé
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** African (37 tribes; largest and most important are Ewe, Mina, and Kabre) 99%, European and Syrian-Lebanese less than 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Christian 29%, Muslim 20%, indigenous beliefs 51% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official and the language of commerce), Ewe and Mina (the two major African languages in the south), Kabye (sometimes spelled Kabiye) and Dagomba (the two major African languages in the north) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2011-Atlas):** \$3.441 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **GNI per capita (2011-PPP):** \$1,030 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **Literacy rate:** 60.9% (male 75.4%, female 46.9%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Faure Gnassingbe (since May 4, 2005)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 400 regularly registered publications, out of which 78 are currently operational; Radio Stations: 80 registered radio stations, 80 operational countrywide; Television Stations: 12 registered television stations
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** The Togo News Agency (state-owned) ACP-Inter and Savoir-news (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 356,300 (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX TOGO



Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Togo Objective Score: 1.85

The panelists were unanimous in recognizing that in West Africa, Togo as a country has some of the best legal texts that protect and favor freedom of speech and freedom of the press. However, it is the application of these legal texts that is problematic. Legal and political harassment are often set in motion to hinder the realization of these freedoms that are guaranteed by the law.

Among the texts that guarantee these rights in Togo are the constitution, the press and communications code, and the law on governing the organization and functioning of the High Authority for Audiovisuals and Communication (HAAC).

According to article 26 of the constitution, freedom of the press is recognized and guaranteed by the state. It is thus protected by law. The same article states that the press cannot be subject to prior authorization, bond, censorship, or other restrictions. The prohibition of dissemination of any publication cannot and should not be enforced except by a court order. This provision of the constitution is repeated in the press and communications code. Under Article 1 and according to this provision, the written press and audiovisual communications are free, subject to compliance within the requirements of the law. This legal framework is supplemented by the institutional law that regulates the operational procedures of the HAAC, the national regulatory

LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

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

Another newspaper, La Nouvelle, has been permanently banned from publication since July 2012 because it broke a story on recruitment in the public-service sector being decided purely along lines of ethnicity as well as a story on the many mistresses of the head of state.

body of the media. Thus, there is a judicial framework in Togo that protects freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The tragedy is that these legal precedents are poorly applied, sometimes even forgotten, by the judiciary and the institutions of the republic.

In many respects, the licensing of audiovisual media is not fair; it is sometimes political and often noncompetitive. In principle, under the law, licensing is the responsibility of the HAAC, which makes the broadcasting frequencies available through the Regulatory Authority of Posts and Telecommunications (known by its French acronym, ARTP). But in practice, it is ARTP that assigns the frequencies in exchange for fees. If one is not associated with the ruling regime, it is difficult to obtain a frequency. This is seen, for example, in the capital, Lomé, where for more than four years it has been said that there are no more frequencies available. Yet, Radio City FM and the television station *La Chaîne du futur* (known by its French acronym, LCF) belong to very high-ranking members of the regime in power and have obtained frequencies without difficulty while other applicants have been subjected to a bidding war to try to obtain a frequency.

The market entry and tax structure for the media are roughly similar to other industries in Togo. However, it is noteworthy that the media are not harassed by the taxation services to pay taxes. The press in Togo effectively pays annual taxes in royalties ranging from XOF 400,000 to XOF 700,000 (\$800 to \$1,400), depending on whether the radio is in the provinces or in the capital. The same is true for television, which can pay between XOF 700,000 and XOF 1.2 million (\$1,400 and \$2,400). Apart from these fees, audiovisual media pay taxes, whereas very few outlets in the print media have formed themselves into real businesses that appear in the records of the Ministry of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It may then be said that while the press has a certain advantage, it does not yet meet the requirements and foundations of a real business.

Criminal acts against journalists or media outlets in Togo are insidious and are usually in the form of threats or direct summons in the courts. In Togo, there are political double standards. Journalistic freedom, which is recognized by legislation, is constantly being threatened while the people at the top of the government and those acting on its behalf enjoy a culture of impunity. In 2011 and 2012, many journalists suffered physical attacks. The most striking cases include the following: Noël Tadegnon, correspondent for Reuters TV and Deutsche Welle TV, who was beaten by a horde of security forces led by the Chief Commissioner Sama in April 2012 while he was covering a demonstration of the opposition; Max Carmel Savi, chief editor of *Tribune d'Afrique*, was kidnapped in the heart of Lomé's administrative center in February 2012 following an appointment made with him by an individual working with the Service of Search and Investigation (known by its French acronym, SRI) of the National Police; Tony Sodji, a photojournalist and cameraman, had trouble with some opposition protesters who accused him of working in collusion with the intelligence services in June 2012. It should be remembered that this same Sodji was shot by a rubber bullet and had his hand cut by a knife by security forces two years earlier. Ayi Atayi, a journalist from the private daily newspaper *Forum de la Semaine*, was seriously assaulted and had his camera snatched when he was covering a land dispute between two families at the hotel Eda Oba in Lomé.

There are private prosecutions against newspapers: the *Indépendant Express* was ordered to pay XOF 200 million (\$400,000) for damages and interest and a fine of XOF 800,000 (\$1,600). The daily *Liberté* and the *Alternative* newspapers were sentenced to pay a sum of XOF 400 million (\$800,000) to Cina Lawson, the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, for publishing false news and defamation. *Tribune d'Afrique* was banned from publication in Togo because it led investigations into a case of pedophilia in which the current president of the National Assembly of Togo, El Hadj Abass Bonfoh, is involved. Another newspaper, *La Nouvelle*, has been permanently banned from publication since July 2012 because it broke a story on recruitment in the public-service sector being decided purely along lines of ethnicity as well as a story on the many mistresses of the head of state. Since February 2011, several private radio stations have been closed. The case of *Radio X Solaire* is still pending before the courts despite having met all the conditions required by law; radio stations *Métropolys*, *Carrée Jeune*, and *Providence* have also been closed for unjustified reasons that many consider misleading.

The public or state media benefit from preferential treatment because they are subject to the decision-makers of the governing regime. The panelists and the general public

feel that the public media are the sounding board for the government and the regime. This situation is facilitated because the head of state is solely responsible for appointing the directors of these public media and government information agencies. These media outlets, which are heavily subsidized by the state, are not independent. Moreover, the journalists and technicians who work there have civil-servant status. Clearly, the law as it exists now does not favor either the state media or the private media. However, in practice it is the public media that are favored in terms of access to public or government information.

In Togo, judges apply the Criminal Code rather than the Press Code to punish libel. This practice is a distortion of the law. Indeed, libel is a matter of civil law punishable by the Criminal Code's article 58. But as a press offense, libel is regulated by the Press Code of 1998. Amended in August 2004, it removes prison sentences and establishes fines as punishment. Thus, the punishment for libel against the president of the republic is a fine of between XOF 2.5 million and XOF 5 million (\$5,000 and \$10,000). This is the costliest fine of the Press Code. In the case of press offenses, it is the media that publish the information that provides the proof and not the victim. And civil servants hide behind so-called state secrets and refuse to give information to journalists, especially private journalists, out of fear of losing their jobs.

Togolese law is still silent on cyber crime. That is why, for the moment, no Internet provider or web hosting service has appeared in court. Public information is the most difficult to obtain, particularly for private journalists. According to the panelists, it should be noted that although access to public information is difficult, journalists do not try very hard to get it. Even if the person who provides the information is particularly forthcoming, the panelists pointed out that journalists are still badly organized in the processing of the information due to the quality of their training. These journalists often do not work with basic supplies and equipment, and when they do receive certain information, they end up revealing their sources.

The Togolese media have several foreign news sources at their disposal. The most important known international news agencies include AFP, *l'Agence Panafricaine de Presse* (known by its French acronym, PANAPRESS), Reuters, AP, and Xinhua. Apart from these agencies, RFI, BBC, Africa No.1, Deutsche Welle, and Voice of America are major global radio stations that provide much information to the Togolese media. In television, the area is inundated with cable channels such as CNN, France 24, Africa 24, TV5 Monde, Africable, and other continental channels such as *Télésud* and Al Jazeera. In terms of Internet access, many Togolese Internet users and bloggers use YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. National news,

albeit controlled, is provided by *l'Agence Togolaise de Presse* (known by its French acronym, ATOP).

In terms of entry into the profession, anyone is free to become a journalist in Togo, and the government does not require any license to do so. Nor does it impose any restriction on journalists' special rights. The only legal requirement for anyone who wishes to claim the title of journalist is the press card, issued by the HAAC, or, failing that, a professional badge provided by the media outlets themselves. Even so, there are some journalists who go on location to report without any identification at all. It should also be noted that some media professionals refuse to comply with the requirements for issuing press cards. With regard to training, there are no real journalism schools, only centers that offer training in communications that anyone with the financial means can attend. Hiring policies in the private sector are not subject to any government or political influence, and journalists are free to organize themselves to defend their rights. Unfortunately, the fact is that associations for media professionals have somewhat diverged from their mission, which has caused dissension among members. These disagreements have led to the creation of new associations, such as *SOS Journalistes en Danger* and *le Syndicat National des Journalistes Indépendants du Togo* (known by its French acronym, SYNJIT), to better defend freedom of the press and specific interests of journalists. Old and new media organizations regard each other with hostility and are still unable to work well with one another.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Togo Objective Score: 1.45

Journalistic standards are not fully respected and applied, resulting in a lack of objectivity and fairness in news reports. These reports are, for the most part, poorly documented, which leads to inconsistencies, superficiality, and an overall lack of in-depth research. Most media repeat their content, and radio stations run nearly identical programs to one another. This limits the variety of information for readers and listeners and narrows their perspectives. While some authorities are consulted on specific subjects, one must note, however, the lack of professionalism of the journalists who fail to convey to the readers and listeners the experience and knowledge of these experts. Furthermore, some experts have a tendency to hold back certain information, due to the prevailing sociopolitical climate, particularly in the academic field and among people close to those in power. Nevertheless, notable efforts have been made, markedly so in some French-speaking programs and in local languages, such as *"Dites-nous, docteur"* (health program on LCF),

Some news reporters, infuriated by the current regime's unorthodox methods for aiding and abetting international fraud, are starting to come to terms with their fears and are shedding light on the dark secrets of those in power.

"Carnet de l'éducation" (education journal), and *"Le journal de l'économie"* (economic journal on the national television channel, TVT).

As for bloggers, they still have difficulties consulting specialists directly and tend to focus on sources already available on the Internet. The largest problem with the Togolese press is its noncompliance with ethical and professional standards, as reporters continue to struggle with adhering to these standards.

This situation is most alarming in print media, where false information is often published. Issues such as violations of the presumption of innocence, libel, and invasion of privacy plague print media. Over the airwaves, inaccuracies are often found in interactive programming, where attention is given to individuals who tend to shout abuse and insults. Some of the hosts of these programs are unable to control and lead the discussion. As a result, guests on these shows have a tendency to believe that Togolese journalists lack sophistication and education.

Given the political climate in Togo, journalists have traditionally developed a penchant for self-censorship.

JOURNALISM MEETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS:

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

Since 2011, this has begun to change. Some news reporters, infuriated by the current regime's unorthodox methods for aiding and abetting international fraud, are starting to come to terms with their fears and are shedding light on the dark secrets of those in power. Another form of self-censorship practiced by Togolese journalists is to trade information for money. Various threats against the media mean that journalists deal rarely with national security, the armed forces, or ethnic groups. In editorial offices, many directors pressure news reporters to write according to a specific agenda. This is done because the media's owners are often either affiliated with a political party or are paid in exchange for not releasing information that would otherwise undermine their ownership.

There are certain key issues that journalists are unable to cover because of fear of reprisals, lack of resources, or simply a lack of professionalism. Issues related to national security, the military, drug trafficking, and corruption connected to those in political or military control are mostly beyond the reach of news reporters due to safety concerns. The few newspapers that have dared to address these topics—*La nouvelle*, *Tribune d'Afrique*, *Indépendant Express*, and the daily *Liberté*—have paid a price for doing so.

Togolese journalists have meager wages and sometimes are not paid at all. The same applies to the state media. In the private media, many managers misappropriate all their companies' money for their personal needs. The highest paid receive a salary ranging from XOF 40,000 to XOF 80,000 (\$80 to \$160). Most receive between XOF 20,000 and XOF 30,000 (\$40 and \$60) or less, while the guaranteed minimum wage (known by its French acronym, SMIG) is XOF 35,000 (\$70). This is the reason behind many journalists' chasing their per diem and transportation costs, commonly called "*final statement*" or "*gumbo*," which is the amount that event organizers provide to journalists. Low pay levels in the Togolese media lead to rampant corruption. Broadcast media, previously critical of the practice of print journalists' accepting money for stories, have changed their tune and now remain suspiciously silent on these matters.

On most Togolese radio and television stations, entertainment programs take precedence over the more serious programming. Music, game shows, and movies account for at least 70 percent of the airtime, and religious programming is also prevalent. True information barely accounts for 20 to 25 percent of the programming time. Documentaries and the coverage of major events are sporadic at best. Fortunately, the public turns to cable television to satisfy its thirst for information.

The audiovisual media in the country are scheduled to become digital in 2015, which will affect most of the existing

audiovisual media providers that are still using analog signals. Most current outlets' equipment is antiquated and obsolete, and therefore incompatible with the demands of modern media. *Radio Lomé*, the national station, still uses antiquated equipment that is often in disrepair. The state television station, established in 1973, still uses antiquated equipment. These two national stations cannot even cover the entire country, which is only a mere 56,000 square kilometers. Private media hardly fare any better; however, some are beginning to invest in more modern equipment. Such is the case for LCF and *Radio Télévision Delta Santé* (known by its French acronym, RTDS). In print media, newspapers are still found in tele-centers. Rare are those outlets that have their own printing equipment, as many media do not have head offices, and therefore little in the way of equipment. Printing is still done with offset presses that are barely adapted to the printing requirements of modern newspapers. The only rotary printing press belongs to state-owned *Togo Presse*, and it has been out of commission for more than 15 years.

The number of specialized programs in the Togolese media is on the rise. However, journalists in charge are far from professional, and the technical quality of these programs is dismally poor. Issues related to minorities are next to nonexistent in the Togolese media, either because they are not considered newsworthy or because the issue has political pitfalls. State media produce a few rare programs/reports on these issues, but this type of program is virtually nonexistent in the printed press. State television reporting and private media rarely broach the subject of minority issues directly. There are many reasons, of course, but one can point to a lack of interest, training, and professional education or experience required to produce such reporting. Currently, bloggers do not address minority-related issues and limit themselves to field reports.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Togo Objective Score: 2.06

In Togo, many information sources are available, and information and communications technology (ICT) goes a long way to prevent censorship. However, a variety of information sources are difficult to access because they are much too expensive in a country where over 61.7 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Another challenge is that even those who could afford the cost may not always have access to electricity or the Internet. For citizens living in the country's sub-regions, those in power control Internet traffic by slowing it down or even completely cutting access for hours or even days.

When it comes to state-owned media, the official party line is the only message to be found. Private media, on the other hand, make timid attempts to diversify information even though objectivity is sorely lacking. In rural areas, community radio stations relay information specific to localities.

Beyond these sources of traditional information, mobile telephone services, notably MOOV (private) and TOGOCEL (government-owned) are used to send information via SMS and the Internet. People also rely on social networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to access and provide information. For print media, there is no messaging system in place to distribute newspapers. All print media make do with the informal transport networks to reach remote areas, often several days late. Even the governmental daily, *Togo Presse*, can sometimes take 72 hours to reach subscribers further inland.

Citizens' access to international media is unrestricted, but the costs of these newspapers, magazines, and cable television channels are prohibitively expensive. International newspapers and magazines are very expensive to distribute because Togo is not a member of the Florence Convention (which covers the tax exemption of cultural goods). Citizens of the capital city are privileged, compared with those living in other areas, since community-based media are typically the only media available to the rural public. People involved in politics, associations, and a rare few educated people in the capital city are the only ones who can afford to buy newspapers. Workers' salaries have a considerable impact on the ability to access the Internet, satellite television, and other services.

MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE AND OBJECTIVE NEWS.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

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

Citizens of the capital city are privileged, compared with those living in other areas, since community-based media are typically the only media available to the rural public.

Theoretically, the government does not limit access to national and international media, but its hostility toward some of these media is interpreted as an indirect restriction of access for the general population. One can listen to foreign programs or read foreign news legally. However, the audience must often deal with loss of signal or channel encryption. The foreign printed press is available only in Lomé. The rare few citizens who can afford to do so can access foreign media online. The government does not systematically block access to foreign news sources online, but sometimes the connection is just too slow.

State media outlets are at the beck and call of the current regime. The state media do not reflect the opinion of the different political parties. Instead, they echo the party line of the government. Most news reporters in public or private media work for their own interests. They do not consider it to be their role to serve the public at large in an apolitical manner. Instead, they work to further their own ambitions. State media partially fill the gaps left by commercial television by offering programs on public affairs. And they occasionally promote cultural and educational programs. Independent press agencies collect and distribute news for print and radio media.

There is one official press agency, ATOP, and three budding private agencies: *Agence de Communication et de Presse* (known by its French acronym, ACP-Inter), *Savoir News*, and *Afreepress*. These press agencies select the news to broadcast and provide current data, but journalists rarely take full advantage of them. However, press agencies like Reuters, AP, AFP, and PANAPRESS are in the country and provide a different perspective of news sources.

News programs are produced by independent broadcast media. Some, however, broadcast programs from the major international television stations for several hours at a time. Private media produce their own news programs, but these are different from those produced by state or public media. The difference is evident by the way content is treated and the editorial direction. Most stations produce their own programs, which are often broadcast in the local languages for regional audiences. However, in terms of quality, there is still a lot to be done. Information and news are provided

Advertising, which barely exists in Lomé, is virtually unheard of in other cities. The advertising sector is dominated by international agencies and their local subsidiaries.

to independent media by sources outside the government, usually from foreign sources, and community media produce news programs that typically do not meet local demand. Bloggers mostly aggregate news from other sources. Content is rarely original.

Media owners do not disclose their financial participation, the accounting standards of their businesses, or the operating structures that they control. There are laws regarding the disclosure of media ownership, but in general information concerning media ownership is not accessible to the public, except in cases of conflict or legal disputes related to said property. The owners of these media circumvent the laws by using fronts or figureheads. For instance, the directors of certain radio and television stations, particularly those close to the elite, are essentially fronts or figureheads. Such is the case for LCF, TV2, or *Radio Zéphyr*. The public has absolutely no knowledge of who controls the blogs and other online media.

Officially, there is no governmental monopoly or oligarchy in media ownership. However, and increasingly so, members of the elite, through the use of figureheads, have a tendency to take controlling interest in certain media outlets to further the party ideology, especially in the country's interior. There are currently no commercial conglomerates involved with the media because they are not financially viable. Foreign investment in media is insignificant, if it exists at all.

Local radio stations produce programs that cater to specific needs of minority groups, such as gender-related issues like child-rearing. However, issues relating to ethnicity are somewhat taboo, as the government and a number of citizens are of the opinion that raising the subject would stimulate racial/ethnic hatred. Newspapers covering minority issues, particularly of ethnic discrimination, are often harassed. There are no media outlets published in the minority languages of Togo. Most Togolese media outlets attempt to provide information concerning local and national news. They occasionally cover international news if it has a direct impact on the country.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Togo Objective Score: 1.08

Media outlets and their supporting industries (such as distribution and printing) are not viable or professional industries. The independent media suffer greatly from a genuine lack of management ability. Media outlets tend to adopt a rather informal management style, and some newspapers do not have head offices or a newsroom. Accounting and financial practices are at odds with international standards. Media outlets lack the financial resources to hire qualified professionals to handle accounting, marketing, and human resources.

Sometimes, the editorial staff is just a publication director, given that there is no head office. Community media are also not well-managed business and are rarely profitable. State-run media do not efficiently use taxpayers' money. These media are very loosely managed, and state-run media receive income from multiple sources that are often neither legal nor transparent.

The editorial policies of several media outlets are unfortunately influenced by individuals who pay for specific articles. As such, sales, sponsorship, advertising, and private funding affect the content of such media outlets. State-run media lack adequate and guaranteed funding that would afford them the opportunity to avoid political influence. Community media outlets do not have sufficient financial resources, and this lack of income has a direct impact on editing policies, management, and even the content of these media outlets.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED BUSINESSES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

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

The advertising sector is not developed in Togo. There are only three or four advertisers essentially affiliated with the government that are able to target any media outlet they choose. Private media professionals lack the training necessary to use advertising to generate revenue. On the other hand, the few profits that are generated through advertising are typically used as bonuses for the directors of the outlet. Advertising, which barely exists in Lomé, is virtually unheard of in other cities. The advertising sector is dominated by international agencies and their local subsidiaries. The various media outlets only sporadically use the services of ad agencies and in rare instances sell their advertising space directly to advertisers.

Advertising income as a percentage of the total is not within the accepted standards for commercial media outlets and contributes little to the development of the media sector. The Togolese media survive on a diverse mix of income sources, including advertising, direct sales, and short-lived subsidies.

Media directors do not feel the need to increase advertising in their programs as a major income source. Advertising does not produce enough income per advertisement; thus, it is necessary to increase the number of ads to achieve the income targets. Failing this approach, media outlets will face bankruptcy. In terms of airtime and space taken by advertisements, the governmental daily newspaper and the national television channel seem to generate income better than their private-sector counterparts.

Subsidies and the frequency of state-provided financial assistance are determined according to political interests and motives. State subsidies subjugate or alienate the private media that receive them. For many, state subsidies are a way for the government to indirectly influence the editorial policy and independence of the editorial staff. The government, through state companies such as TOGOTELECOM and others, discriminates between media outlets because they are a significant source of advertising income. Some media outlets do not receive subsidies because they are considered to be too critical of the current government.

There are no market studies to derive strategies, improve advertising income, or personalize products according to the public's needs and interests. Currently, no reliable market study has ever been done in Togo. No market studies exist on the ground to establish strategic plans. There are also no polls to measure ratings, print runs, and other statistics of interest.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Togo Objective Score: 1.55

Togolese press owners' associations are groups of varying interests. There are no commercial associations to serve the industry, such as those that represent editors and owners of broadcasting stations. There are also no editor and broadcaster associations, or commercial associations that truly support members' interests, and there are none that lobby the government on behalf of their members.

About a dozen associations cover journalism in Togo, but a rare few actually take action to defend the interests of the industry. There is no association in Togo to provide legal advice, as they do not have the financial resources or the capability required. Those that exist only provide professional advice through seminars, conferences, debates, and workshops. Membership in these associations requires one to be a journalist affiliated with an editorial staff or to be a publication director. Membership figures tend to be static or even regressive due to various disagreements, leadership issues, interest, dysfunctions, and lack of efficiency. There is also a severe lack of subscriptions required to run these organizations. These associations unfortunately do not represent journalists in a positive light. Theoretically, they are independent. In practice, however, and on certain subjects related to media life, this independence is little more than an illusion.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

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

Nearly 90 percent of the editorial staffs of outlets throughout the country lack a trained editor. Some of the most sorely needed training courses are those to improve writing techniques, reporting, poll taking, and ICT skills. There are no programs that address organizational or business-management training for media outlets.

Active NGOs in the media sector that support an independent press are rare. NGO activities are infrequent, yet they do intervene in times of crisis, during arrests, and during other events that violate free speech. They have, at times, been effective. These groups exist only in the capital city and are not involved in the evaluation of the laws concerning the media. They limit themselves to bringing some legal support to journalists and seldom collaborate with international organizations involved with freedom of the press.

Recently, competent graduates from journalism training centers have appeared, but these programs have yet to produce students with significant practical experience, as there are no official schools of journalism in the country. Curiously, these graduates are sometimes integrated in editorial staff led by people less qualified than they are. Among those practicing in the field for several years, but without formal training, many are unwilling and lack the humility necessary to improve their knowledge and professional qualifications. Those who wish to do so often lack the financial means to study overseas. Only the Togolese

state is able to send established journalists for refresher or advanced courses to Senegal, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, or France.

Training opportunities on the ground are available, but they are often too infrequent to improve professional skills. Nearly 90 percent of the editorial staffs of outlets throughout the country lack a trained editor. Some of the most sorely needed training courses are those to improve writing techniques, reporting, poll taking, and ICT skills. There are no programs that address organizational or business-management training for media outlets.

Newspapers and printers tend to belong to the informal sector, and owners lack sufficient financing, which is why newspapers tend to be far behind on their payments to printers. Printers are rare and seldom produce quality work. When printers exist in the private sector, the government requires taxes such as VAT and income tax. Printers that are state-owned companies are managed as such. Media broadcasting channels mostly belong to the private sector, but their administrative and financial management is far from being done according to accepted standards. Broadcasting channels are not managed efficiently, and as such, they are not self-sufficient. In some cases, they actually impede the efficient distribution of news content due to political pressures or their own internally inefficient operational procedures. Vendors and distributors are often slow to pay media outlets for sold copies.

There are no governmental or commercial conglomerates controlling Internet access. Instead, it is the government, through its public telecommunications infrastructure, that manages and controls Internet access throughout the country. Many subscribers complain about dismal connection speeds, excessive costs, and cyber attacks.

List of Panel Participants

Joseph K. K. Donu, judge, Supreme Court of Togo, Lomé

Kodjovi Gbadayi, radio journalism trainer, Lomé

Kokou Noël Tadegnon, manager, MEDIATOGO, Lomé

Raphaël Kpade-Adjare, lawyer; president, Togolese League of Human Rights, Lomé

Guy-Mario Abalo, correspondent, Radio France International-Togo, Lomé

Eklou Komla Fomadi, journalist; lecturer, School of Communication Technology and Arts, Lomé

Olivier Koffi Tovor, journalist; press secretary, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Lomé

Augustin Medeweki Sizing, president, Togolese Media Observatory, Lomé

Adjowa Awussaba, councilor, High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication, Lomé

Mikaila Abass Saibou, publication director, *Le Regard*, Sokodé

Valentin Komla Nyatika, journalist, *Journal Crocodile*; president, Togolese League of Voters Atakpamé

Kwamvi Joël Sodji, director, TV7, Lomé

Moderator and Author

Francis Pedro Amuzun Assiongbon, publication manager, *Journal Crocodile*; secretary-general of the Togolese League of Electors, Lomé

Observer

Ayawo Franck Assah, correspondent, Panapresse and Media Foundation for West Africa, Lomé

The Togo study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, Media Foundation for West Africa, Accra, Ghana. The panel discussion was convened on September 22, 2012.