

**A mid-term review of International Media Support's
Media Cooperation with the Arab World and Iran Programme**

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Abbreviations

AIF	Arab Institute of Film
ARIJ	Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
CDFJ	Centre for the Defence of Freedom of Journalists
CKU/DCCD	Danish Centre for Culture and Development
DUJ	Danish Union of Journalists
DR	Danish Broadcasting Corporation
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
OSI	Open Society Institute

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Background

IMS's "Media Cooperation with the Arab World and Iran Programme" aims to strengthen the development of independent media in the Arab region and Iran through partnerships between local actors and like-minded colleagues in the region and on an international level. It is nearly entirely funded by the Danish Foreign Ministry's "Partnership for Progress and Reform" which is part of the government's Arab Initiative that aims to strengthen dialogue and inter-institutional collaboration between governments, governmental institutions and civil society in Denmark and countries in the Arab world.

The heart of IMS's programme is about building professional relationships nationally and across borders in order to address challenges facing media freedom, professional journalists' organisations, standards and skills. It also aims to encourage the dissemination of a more diverse range of stories and viewpoints and to foster greater intercultural understanding between media professionals in Denmark and the Arab region.

1.2 Achievements

IMS and its partners are overall "on track" if one compares achievements to date with the immediate objectives that are set out in the programme document. Given the complexities of working in the Arab region in general, the political crisis that erupted between Denmark and the Arab following the publication of Danish cartoons about the Prophet Mohammed, the war in Lebanon, and adding in the difficulties of initiating new, pioneering projects, IMS and its partners should be applauded for what they have achieved together in little over than a year.

Some highlights from the initiatives include:

- The establishment of a regional working group of human rights organisations who are engaged in monitoring media's coverage of elections. In 2006, the group supported monitoring exercises in 5 countries. Most monitoring reports received widespread local and international attention. This initiative serves as a major contribution towards civil society organisations holding the media accountable to professional standards. These initiatives also convinced several participating organisations to incorporate media freedom and freedom of expression issues into their organisation's overall priorities.
- The establishment of the first Arab network for investigative journalism, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism. In 2006, the network has supported 31 journalists from the region to conduct in-depth investigations for their media outlets.
- The local production and dissemination of quality children and youth programming with national broadcasters in Jordan and Syria in collaboration with the Danish public broadcaster.

- The establishment of an independent, regional Arab Institute for Film. In 2006, training and production support was provided to emerging documentary filmmakers, which resulted in the production of 8 quality documentaries.

These achievements are without a doubt in part due to the fact that IMS has gained trust and respect from its partners and its partners feel equally valued by IMS. IMS received high marks overall from its partners with regards to the role it has played so far and in the strategic choices it has made. IMS staff members are applauded for providing funding without imposing its own agenda onto its partners. It has lived up to its principle of supporting projects that fit the demands and needs of professionals in the Arab region. Its staff members were also applauded for their professionalism and knowledge of media issues which enable them to provide constructive criticism, ideas, links to other like-minded colleagues and organisations, as well as problem solving support both to partners in Europe and the Arab region.

IMS is also applauded and respected for being a risk taker. It has chosen to invest in new initiatives with no previous track record and that often have little to no precedent in the region. Unlike many projects in the media development field that, according to one of the partners “are much like Bedouins, you find no trace of them once they have passed through,” IMS has chosen another road. It has backed up individuals who seek to establish local structures that represent and foster important professional ideals and values in the media field and that (hopefully) will endure for years to come. It is the difference between “planting an olive tree and a tomato plant. The tomato plant will come and go but the olive tree will ensure that you are fed for 100 years,” says one IMS partner. IMS and its partners are in the business of planting trees.

Its choice to support regional initiatives rather than national ones is considered overall “the right road” even though it is “the hard road.” Individuals from various countries coming together to work on a collective project remains a challenge, some attributing it to cultural and historical factors and others to the lack of a democratic culture in the region even among civil society actors. No matter the reasons, these regional initiatives have managed to achieve results and partners believe it is a necessary and even desirable growing pain.

IMS’s choice of building-in partnerships between like-minded professionals in the Arab region and Denmark in most of the projects has shown positive dividends. This is because IMS was able to identify exceptional Danish institutions and individuals who are able to add clear value to the initiatives in the region and because of the attitude of individuals involved. They come to the projects with open minds, professionalism, and treat others as equals.

Finally, IMS is able to balance pioneering with collaboration and cooperation with others (donors, international and local organisations) in the interest of taking a responsible and holistic approach to media development in the region. Within this programme, IMS supports a number of projects spearheaded by European and/or Arab organisations and supported by other donors with whom they work closely.

1.3 Challenges

IMS and its partners face several challenges in the next few years.

The most crucial is to strengthen and build on the achievements of the programme. Because many of the projects supported in this programme are new initiatives, they need to build up a track record, capture and demonstrate their achievements, develop

multi-year plans and start seeking additional sources of funding. This will require maintaining activities while spending resources and time on organisational and further strategy development which is not always viewed as “sexy” projects by back donors.

Like for most “development” organisations, incorporating learning and developing relevant and useful monitoring and evaluation systems are a struggle. Both IMS and its partners would benefit from taking the time to review how they currently reflect on their work and how best to monitor and evaluate their activities.

IMS is currently coordinating three projects. While this has enabled activities to take place, it is ultimately not a desirable situation especially in the case of two projects¹. This role places high demands on staff time and, as IMS knows and agrees, it puts IMS in the “driver’s seat” which risks decreasing ownership. In one case, IMS and its partners agree on a hand over strategy and in the other, there is no clear desirable or possible alternative in sight.

Just as IMS is applauded for the roles it has taken on, tensions arose with partners when IMS stepped in (with the approbation of partners) to fill in administrative and management gaps in the interest of keeping activity plans on target. These tensions were largely due to the fact that rules of engagement (or rights and obligations) were not sufficiently clear. IMS needs to take care to avoid taking on responsibilities that push them into a “vicious” circle rather than a “virtuous” circle with its partners even if their partners are quite happy to allow them to do so.

Finally, two projects have shown little progress in the last year. While it is too early to judge their potential, they need to be monitored closely and mutual expectations for the coming year need to be clearly communicated and agreed to.

1.4 Overall Recommendations²

1.4.1 Overall programme management issues

Consolidate!

Given the very short (two-year) life span of each programme phase, IMS should not be too eager to adopt or support additional projects or initiatives. Current successful initiatives need time to mature and weaker initiatives need to be given their test period.

Staffing

IMS needs to be able to at least maintain if not slightly increase its staffing levels. This is necessary given the “joint venture” aspect of IMS’ work and thus the importance of relationship building to the nature of IMS’s work and given the various roles IMS has played that it needs to continue playing, at least for the short-term, given the pioneering nature of many of the projects in this programme,

¹ The projects concerned are the media monitoring in Component 1 and Component 4, the TV production exchange. The third project, the twinning programme, does not apply because it is a funding facility made available via IMS for professionals in the Arab region.

² Specific recommendations for each component are available in the section of the report which deals with each component separately.

Developing a programme plan

IMS would benefit from developing a calendar of benchmarks for each programme phase that may enable it to meet some of its information gathering and information sharing needs more smoothly.

Sharpen the programme logic

In general, the overall programme logic should be sharpened now that IMS and its partners have more experience “under their belts.” Under each component, I have provided feedback on what revisions to consider for the “immediate objectives and results” as they are currently stated in the programme document.

Keep your finger on the pulse

While IMS staff members are skilled professionals that come to their jobs with knowledge of the Arab region, I recommend that staff structure time into their partner visits to meet with organisations and individuals that are not directly involved in their projects in order to keep abreast of developments and get outsider views on the projects they are supporting. IMS could also consider making better use of some of the individuals involved in the projects they already support and other key actors to get ideas, critical feedback and recommendations on its overall programme choices and directions.

Managing weaker projects

For the projects that have shown little to no progress in the last year or face particular challenges, IMS needs to decide on what basis it would agree to continue supporting the projects after 2008. This should be discussed with its partners so that there is mutual understanding around IMS concerns, its expectations in the short-term, and its level of long-term commitment.

Managing IMS’s “management and implementation” role

In the media monitoring project, IMS plays a primary coordinating function. I recommend, as is already being discussed, that IMS and the working group work together towards achieving an effective handover of IMS’ coordination responsibilities to the working group.

In the case of the TV production exchange project, there is no current viable alternative to IMS continuing to lead the project. In order for IMS’s role to change, IMS should consider strategies for ensuring a stronger commitment at high management levels within the TV stations by involving them more directly in project activities.

1.4.2 Recommendations on intervention strategies

Regional scope of the initiatives

The regional scope should be maintained and IMS and its back donor should understand that this “set up” may, in some cases, inherently slow down and complicate the implementation of projects.

Institution building

Since IMS has entered into a joint venture of building new organisations, it has made an implicit commitment to supporting not only the quality of the content of the activities but also the quality of the management of the organisation. It is essential that attention

and resources be made available to these new organisations to help them become effective functioning entities.

IMS should be careful not take into upon itself to help fill all their partners' needs. It may not have the competencies required and this may not fit with the role IMS seeks to play.

Involvement of Danish and/or other European expertise

The partnerships forged between Arab and Danish/European professionals in these projects should continue as long as they add value. IMS should structure regular feedback from all sides to understand the continued value of the relationships and be careful never to impose if the partnerships have outlived their purpose.

Partnership building

While IMS strives to create relationships that embrace the spirit of a joint venture, it and its partners must continue to be more vigilant and consistent in articulating and agreeing to rules of engagement and reviewing them as situations change.

1.4.3 Recommendations on promoting greater sustainability

If an organisation holds itself accountable to itself and its beneficiaries first, than it will more likely be accountable to its donors. IMS can play an important role in helping its partners become more accountable and thus sustainable: structure reflection more consistently in their work, capture the outputs and outcomes of their activities, present programmes with clearly articulated objectives and strategies etc. IMS should make budgetary allocations available for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation activities both for IMS and its partners.

1.4.4 Recommendations on budgeting and cost effectiveness

There are several factors that give confidence that funds are being spent appropriately and effectively: 1) an organisation's capacity to budget realistically; 2) an organisation's capacity to manage its expenditures; 3) evidence of sound financial control and checks and balances mechanisms; and 4) measuring spending in relationship to quantity and quality of outputs. These are the areas IMS needs to be attentive to with regards to itself and its partners.

In the next phase of the programme, budgeting needs to continue to be driven by partners based on experience they gathered in the last year. This will create more ownership around budgets drawn up for each of the components and will enable budgets to be more "realistic" in terms of budget line allocations. Funding should be made available to support partner organisations to build and continuously improve their financial management systems.

1.4.5 Recommendations on a future evaluation of the programme

In order to build on this review, a following evaluation process should capture, in a more structured and in-depth way, the outcomes and the quality of the outputs of the various projects. The evaluation should also include understanding IMS's programme in the broader context of media activities and media support available in the Arab region. This would entail conducting interviews or focus group discussions with the target groups of the various initiatives, other media support organisations, and conducting an in-depth qualitative analysis of the outputs.

Since most of the initiatives IMS is supporting do not have their own evaluation processes in place, this evaluation exercise could be used to help the partners in the region to consider what they want to evaluate and how to best to do it. Given the short (two year) time span of each programme period, I do not recommend conducting large external evaluations at the end of each programme phase in order to judge the merit or worth of the programme. Such an evaluation would be more useful if conducted at the end of a 4 year period of implementation.

1.4.6 Recommendations on how to incorporate learning in IMS and its partners practice

Schedule periodic programme staff meetings and a yearly programme retreat.

Staff should plan to meet regularly to share information, discuss successes, raise issues of concern or share dilemmas about their practice. Since new staff will be joining the programme, time will probably need to be dedicated to creating common understanding among staff around the programme's strategy and objectives.

Inculcate action learning as a tool in IMS's practice.

IMS should consciously incorporate the action learning loop into its practice and work principles. This means consciously giving attention to all four segments of action learning. i.e. planning > action > reflection > learning. (See Annex 5) Learning tools could also be used in discussions with partners.

Peer consultations

For the purposes of team building and stimulating colleagues to learn from each other, IMS should consider inter-collegial dialogue to take place 2 or 4 times a year among programme staff. The financial controller should not be forgotten here!

2 Introduction

2.1 The terms of reference

This evaluation serves as a mid-term review of IMS's "Media Cooperation with the Arab World and Iran" programme which runs from September 2005 to September 2007. This review is taking place half way (one year) into the implementation period of the programme. It is seen as part of IMS's monitoring process and as a means to identify issues to take into consideration for the next two-year programme phase. IMS will present a proposal for an extension of the programme to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2007.

The review was designed to be a participatory process. Its overall objective was to enable IMS and its partners to be better equipped to improve and refine its work in the coming year through a process of reflection and learning. The review also intended to provide insights on what has been achieved to date in relationship to immediate objectives as stated in the programme document and an assessment of strategic choices made so far. Special attention to partnership-building, the "backbone" of this programme, and institution building was also requested. Finally, a list of specific issues was raised for consideration for each component of the programme. See the terms of reference in Annex 1.

2.2 Methodology

Kim Brice conducted this review between November 2006 and January 2007 in large part with the participation of two IMS staff persons Mrs. Lotte Dahlmann, the Programme Director, and Mr. Rasmus Steen, previously coordinator of the twinning component (component 6) and recently appointed programme officer for the overall programme. IMS and the reviewer decided to conduct this review jointly in order to enhance the "learning" aspect in the process as much as possible.

The reviewer travelled to Copenhagen, Amman, Beirut and Cairo and interviewed a cross-section of individuals involved in the implementation of each component. Due to budget considerations and time constraints, some interviews were conducted by telephone. See list of individuals interviewed in Annex 2.

In mid-December, a draft report of initial findings was presented and discussed at a two-day meeting in Copenhagen with a select number of representatives of each partner organisation and project as well as IMS staff. The recommendations in this report stem partially from these discussions. This meeting enabled all partners supported by IMS in the Arab region to meet each other for the first time and to inform each other of their initiatives. This partner meeting also launched discussions and preparations for the joint development of a proposal for the next phase of the programme.

The terms of reference called for this review to be "participatory." Though I and the IMS team did our best to achieve this, we could have done better. First, IMS should have involved partners in developing the terms of reference at the onset. Secondly, it would have been useful if various implementing parties and IMS could have been brought together to discuss and debate key issues jointly. Instead, individuals in Europe and the Arab region, with one exception, were interviewed separately which in my view did not foster sufficient dialogue and reflection where it needed to be, between all

involved partners. The effort to gather partners at the end of this review in Copenhagen was certainly a step in the right direction.

I thank all IMS staff and partners concerned for the thinking, energy and time they gave to this review given the tight timeline we were all working on. I also thank Michael Wagtman, an MFA consultant, for his time and keen ability to distil clarity out of chaos.

2.3 Structure of report

This report starts with an overview of the programme with special attention given to the key issues the review is intended to cover. It is followed by detailed findings for each component. Finally analysis and findings of overall issues relating to the programme are presented followed by overall recommendations. Recommendations for each component are presented in the component sections of this report. An initial draft of this report was prepared and distributed to relevant IMS staff and representatives of all partner organisations and projects. IMS and partners provided feedback and inputs which were, for the most part, incorporated into the final version of this report.

3 The IMS Programme

3.1 Overview

IMS's "Media Cooperation with the Arab World and Iran Programme" aims to strengthen the development of independent media in the Arab region and Iran through partnerships between local actors and like-minded colleagues in the region and on an international level. It is nearly entirely funded by the Danish Foreign Ministry's "Partnership for Progress and Reform" which is part of the government's Danish-Arab Initiative that aims to strengthen dialogue and inter-institutional collaboration between governments, governmental institutions and civil society in Denmark and countries in the Arab world.

The heart of IMS's programme is about building professional relationships nationally and across borders in order to address challenges regarding media freedom, professional organisations, standards and skills as well as to further a diverse range of stories and viewpoints and to foster greater intercultural understanding.

As part of the programme logic, the programme is divided into 6 components that are grouped under four "strategic levels" consisting of 1) addressing media freedom and policy issues, 2) professional media organisations, 3) professional standards and 4) alternative views and intercultural understanding.

In developing the programme, IMS made an effort to avoid duplication by supporting existing initiatives that were already underway such as the IFJ project. In other cases, IMS worked with other like-minded donors, such as the Open Society Institute and Free Voice, in order to forge together a more holistic approach to media development in the Arab world. Each organisation agreed to engage in and support separate parts of the pie in order to implement together a comprehensive approach. It is in this context that the IMS, along with Open Society, are supporting the media monitoring initiative. Where further gaps and needs were expressed by local media actors, IMS created the opportunity for these gaps to be filled by supporting a number of pioneering projects, some consisting of starting-up new organisations and others of launching new initiatives in the area of media monitoring, peer review and in public service programming.

IMS and its partners had to face several extreme external challenges during this first year of implementation: animosity and boycotts against Denmark as a result of the publication of cartoons about the prophet Mohammed and attacks on Lebanon by Israeli forces. To IMS and its partners' credit, these events did not harm the programme or relationships in any significant way.

Below I elaborate on the strategic choices IMS has made in the programme and on the manifestation of partnership-building within the programme to date.

3.2 Strategic Choices

IMS has made several clear strategic choices in this programme.

In order to fulfil the goal of obtaining maximum professional exchange between Arab, Iranian and Danish partners they have chosen for two strategies that run across all components:

- To encourage existing projects to take on a **regional scope** or to support existing initiatives that work on a regional level
- To enable **the involvement of Danish or European expertise** in all projects either through “twinning” (collaborative exchanges between media professionals or institutions) or through Danish or European involvement in governance and management structures of organisations or projects and as training providers.

In order to achieve the aim of strengthening the professional development of media in the Arab region and expanding media diversity, IMS has chosen:

- To support **start-ups** – either new projects such as the media monitoring project or new organisations such as ARIJ and AIF -- when these offered a new vision and unique services to media in the region.
- To **implement projects** such as the television production and exchange project.
- To **support initiatives** such as the Eye on the Arab Media project, the IFJ’s journalists union building project, and Free Voice and CDFJ’s “Investing in the Future” project.

3.3 Partnership

Partnerships is said to be the “backbone” of this programme. All initiatives are designed to foster partnerships within the Arab region and with international actors, with a special emphasis on Danish professionals or institutions.

Partnerships between organisations or individuals are grounded in a common cause. In this case, though IMS drove partnership-building, ultimately organisations or individuals both in the Arab region and Denmark decided to work together because they share common professional interests and a common vision: wanting to contribute to creating more independent and diverse media and greater freedom of expression in the Arab region.

Once the parties have agreed to work together comes the sometimes complicated but certainly exciting business of deciding the nature of the partnership and how it will be implemented in practice. Ideally, each relationship is tailored to the goals and circumstances of the parties concerned in equitable and mutually beneficial ways. These decisions are usually made on the basis of the “added value” one partner brings to the other which are determined by what experience, expertise, financial or human resources each has to offer the other.

In the case of this programme, partnership has translated into four specific roles for IMS:

Funder. IMS provides funding. The type and level of funding varies from component to component. In some cases³, IMS funds just one project of an organisation or a coalition of organisations that are often engaged in many other projects and have many other donors. In the majority of cases⁴, the funding is far more substantial: IMS is the sole funder or most significant funder and it supports not only the execution of most of

³ Components 1 (Eye on the Arab Media and legal protection), 2 and 6

⁴ Components 1 (the media monitoring project), 3, 4 and 5.

an organisation's activities but also its running costs. More than this, it has helped create new organisations.

Advisor. IMS provides advice on a variety of issues ranging from strategy and training to organisational issues such as legal registration of organisations and the administration of projects.

Manager/Implementer. IMS is involved in executing the day-to-day management and implementation of a project or organisation.

Broker. IMS helps create linkages between individuals and organisations in order to facilitate them working together. At times it has also played a mediating role between parties.

Policy maker. IMS influences policy development and decision-making.

Annex 3 depicts the various types of roles that IMS plays in each component.

Partnerships are of course a two-way street. In this review however, I mainly examine the role IMS has played in partnerships because this is what the review called for and because of the significant influence IMS has in the partnerships given the various roles they have taken on and the levels of funding involved.

4 Evaluation of programme components

4.1 Component 1: Monitoring, Advocacy and Legal Protection

4.2 Sub-component 1.1 Monitoring media coverage of elections

4.2.1 Short Description

There is a lack of consistent monitoring of media freedom in the Arab region. This project fosters the use of media monitoring during elections as a means of 1) generating quality documentation on the state of the media in target countries and 2) encouraging joint regional media advocacy campaigns, with the end goal of improving professional standards and media policy reforms at national and regional levels. The initiative also aims to build capacity within civil society organisations to advocate on media issues by producing factual documentation on these issues and disseminating it widely to governments, the public and the media. A working group for media and elections in the Arab world, comprising of representatives of human rights groups from Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen was formed to spearhead monitoring efforts in the region. Its activities include developing an appropriate monitoring tool, and training and co-implementing media monitoring with local lead organisations. To date, media monitoring has been successfully conducted in 6 countries. The working group meets several times a year to plan its activities and IMS largely coordinates the project with OSI, both being the project's main funders.

4.2.2 Achievements

This project has broken new ground in the Arab region. It is the first time that Arab civil society organisations have scrutinised media's influence on electoral processes. In most participating countries, it is the first time that detailed content analysis of media has taken place. The methodology used is part of the project's success: it seeks to produce factual and objective information. The timing of the introduction of this project is also seen as a success: it coincides with a trend towards growing liberalisation of the media sector in the region (with several exceptions of course and uneven results in the liberalisation process) which brings along with it greater debate about professional standards and needs.

While the results of the media monitoring has not always been appreciated (especially by those the reports criticise), in most cases the reports have resulted in governments and media responding to the report (it is a report they cannot afford to ignore!) and government representatives engaging with the lead organisation that conducted the monitoring exercise. In Yemen for example, the government realised that it "needs to be more careful about how it manipulates the state media." The government seems to have loosened its grip to create a more positive image: for example, individuals with a more diverse range of views are now invited to be part of debates on state-run television.

Some reports have received regional and international coverage, on Al-Jazeera for example, and some are being used or have the potential for being used as reference material for other advocacy efforts.

Another significant outcome is that the monitoring exercises in some cases were followed by debate at a national level about media professionalism and has heightened

interaction and relationship-building between media and the human rights organisations concerned. In Yemen, the project has “opened the way for media and government to talk seriously about reforms. Now there is a serious debate about reforming laws pertaining to private electronic media in Yemen.” Furthermore, following the monitoring exercise, the lead organisation in Yemen organised a round table with the media to continue discussions with editors and journalists on ethics and professional standards. In Egypt, there is now a discussion about reforming the media policy within the electoral law. Some participating organisations are now engaging more with the media and inviting them to workshops and debates, whereas before “media was the last on our list.”

The project has also had an impact on the overall strategies of some of the organisations participating in the working group. In Egypt, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies is now putting media and freedom of expression on centre stage of its agenda: it is now engaged in a project concerning reform of the state-owned media. The Yemen-based Human Rights Information and Training Centre has chosen freedom of expression as a focus in 2007 and would like to conduct monitoring on how media covers human rights issues in the coming year.

The working group

According to participants interviewed, the regional nature of the working group is crucial. It helps build increasing solidarity between civil society organisations across the region which remains fragile and complicated due to the political context. Furthermore, participants increase their knowledge on electoral issues in their own countries and in neighbouring countries which enables them to compare notes and learn from good and bad examples in the region.

The Arab working group has also developed local experience and expertise in media monitoring. In Bahrain, while no international expert joined the team due to time constraints, the initiative was to a great degree a success and the group takes pride in stating that “we did it ourselves.”

Unlike many other networks that develop a formal structure first before starting their work, this network’s success is that it spent its energy in doing rather than building up a structure. The *raison d’être* of the organisation exists in practice and not just in theory. This has enabled the working group to develop expertise and a track record and represents a strong foundation for its next steps: further strategy development, formalising the group, and diversifying sources of funds.

All those interviewed agreed that there is a need to take steps to institutionalise the working group though there are disagreements on time frames. It is an especially auspicious time for this project to continue since media reform is on political agendas throughout the region.

4.2.3 Challenges

Keeping momentum in the group. Many of the working group members work for organisations that have interests and priorities above and beyond media monitoring. In between elections, members have a tendency to forget about the working group and they tend to rely on IMS and OSI to keep the group on track. The working group also greatly depends on IMS for administrative, accounting, logistics and coordinating support.

The quality of the work. All agreed that further resources need to be invested in building the skills of the local actors. While the international trainers have been useful they fall short when it comes to contextualising the monitoring work which local actors can do better. One member of the working group was especially concerned about remaining vigilant about quality and called for a thorough review of the quality of the reports so far in order to improve on the work.

Another issue raised was the difference in experience and resources organisations have available to develop and implement a dissemination and advocacy strategy around the reports produced.

Strategizing and long-term planning. Until now, according to one working group member, the participants have been re-active rather than pro-active: organising monitoring, sometimes in haste, around upcoming elections rather than developing a plan for coming years with a clear strategy on how and when to involve actors from “new” countries and how best to prepare for these monitoring exercises in each country.

How and when to institutionalise the working group. Discussions have already started regarding the institutionalisation of the working group. While some members feel that this step can be taken in the next months, others feel that more time is needed with the help of IMS (and the Open Society Institute) to plan the transition properly: such as developing a common vision, working principles as well as a longer-term strategy before becoming an independent entity. Earlier this year, disagreements arose in the group about how to deal with a member who had worked unethically and with lack of transparency which resulted in inaction.

4.2.4 On strategy, immediate project objectives and overall results

The novelties of cross-border collaboration, information exchange, knowledge development and building of expertise have been essential to the success of this project. The fact that the working group started conducting activities before formally institutionalising itself has also made its success and provides a strong foundation for the working group’s steps towards greater organisational and financial sustainability. The involvement of international monitoring experts in capacity building was useful at the inception of this project but the experience with monitoring the Bahraini election calls for a revision of the role of international monitoring experts in future activities.

While most immediate objectives as stated in the project document have been achieved or are on their way to being achieved, the third objective which pertains to advocacy for “better media coverage, more transparency and fair elections” requires participating organisations to develop advocacy plans as part of the monitoring exercise and to invest effort and resources on follow-up activities when appropriate, which may not always possible (organisations have other priorities) or desirable (it is not part of their mandate). This objective may need to be revised.

The results as stated in the project document are in line with the partners’ views, more systematic gathering of anecdotal evidence on the outcome and impact of the monitoring project immediately following the exercise and after a period of a few years is necessary however. Besides the reports received from lead organisations immediately following the monitoring exercise, no other form of monitoring and evaluation seems to be in place.

4.2.5 The partnership with IMS

In this component, IMS plays the role of funder, advisor, manager and broker.

According to participants, IMS (and OSI) play a very important role as moderator of the working group and provide important input on the strategy and the content of the work. One member of the group says of IMS, “They are not a donor. At least I don’t experience them like I do my organisation’s other donors. They have not imposed their agenda on us, and I like that we develop proposals together.”

Furthermore, IMS and OSI have provided a crucial international umbrella for this project which serves as a shield from reactions and actions of authoritarian governments. Thus, it is important for this project that it maintains ties with credible international organisations working in the field of freedom of expression.

4.2.6 Recommendations for the future

In the next phase of work, the following should be considered:

Institutionalising the working group

This should be done only once an organisational charter is agreed to by the core members of the working group. This charter should set out the mission, operating principles, rights and obligations of members, funding principles, etc. Until a basis for operations is in place, IMS should continue coordinating the project with OSI.

Continue investing in strengthening local expertise

The various training manuals need to be finalised and translated into Arabic. A section providing concrete examples of a “report model” should be added to the training manual. Issues pertaining to advocacy strategies should be incorporated into the trainings offered under this project.

Reflect and improve on quality and effectiveness of monitoring

There is an interest in conducting a comparative study on media monitoring that has been conducted to date with a view of improving methodology but also advocacy efforts of participating organisations.

The group should consider translating final reports into English in a timely manner so that they can be disseminated and used more widely by international organisations. This would undoubtedly increase the impact of this project at an international level.

Improve ability to plan for the short and medium term

As of 2007, the working group needs to put a yearly plan in place to determine results for the coming year and the scope of its work and what support activities (training etc.) are required in order to operate more effectively.

4.2.7 Issues for IMS and the Arab Working Group to consider

- What needs to be in place or decided on before the Arab working group should and can be formalised? Who will lead and manage this process?
- Until that time, who will ensure that a yearly plan of action is developed and followed?
- What monitoring and/or evaluation processes should be put in place in order to ensure quality of the work? Who will be responsible for coordinating this until a formal structure is in place? What resources need to be made available?

4.3 Sub-component 1.2 Eye on the Arab Media

4.3.1 Short description

With the aim of fostering peer review in order to improve professional standards in the region, the IMS is supporting “Eye on the Arab Media,” a radio program produced by Amman Net, Jordan’s first independent radio station. The program consists of monitoring, reviewing and critiquing news coverage by local media outlets such as daily and weekly newspapers, broadcast media and online journalism.

The weekly programme focuses on professional standards, media ethics and self-regulation. The project also hosts a website that provides access to all previous editions of the program, information about media legislation of the five Arab countries covered by the program, as well as a code of ethics set up and followed by Eye on the Arab Media and guidelines for new journalism graduates. With support from IMS, the weekly radio program is today disseminated (airborne and internet-based broadcasts as well as reprints in newspapers) in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt and Syria.

4.3.2 Achievements

This project, like the media monitoring project described above, is also breaking new ground in the region. Until this project came to existence, holding each other accountable for maintaining ethical and professional standards was virtually unknown and unthinkable to journalists. Its uniqueness is also due to the fact that the programme comments on media’s coverage of topics while the issues are still current so it has a better chance to have an impact.

The director of Amman Net and producer of the programme provided anecdotal evidence of some of the achievements of the project. They gauge the value of the project according to the reactions that they get from journalists. Journalists respond regularly and often negatively to their reports. They see this as healthy and a good start in creating dialogue among peers around professional issues. Following a report in which the radio program disclosed the lack of documented facts in news stories about the situation in Iraq by one of Jordan’s privately-owned daily newspapers, the owner of the newspaper circulated the story from Eye on the Arab Media to its entire staff suggesting they learn from their mistakes to improve on their reporting standards. The programme producer was particularly proud that the most important journalist in Jordan recently wrote a column reacting to one of their reports which exposed the biases around how Jordanian newspapers cover Palestinian issues for example.

Also, their impression is that in recent months, media workshops in Jordan are moving beyond discussions about legal and policy reforms and including debates about professionalism.

Amman Net is also proud that its code of ethics, which is posted on their internet site, is being adopted by other media houses. Several media entities, including a local radio station in Hebron, have taken on their code of ethics as their own.

At the time of the review, the producer of the programme has just returned from a trip to Denmark that was organised through IMS's twinning programme. This opportunity and the quality of the visit were very much appreciated. The producer explained, "Everyone I met with was relevant and credible because of their high professional quality. The big success of this trip is that I foresee partnerships with some of the institutions I met that will enable Amman Net to re-examine its business model and to improve the content of the "Eye on the Arab media" programme."

4.3.3 Challenges

The main challenges facing this project are three fold: 1) understanding how the programme is having an impact in countries besides Jordan (where it is based); 2) reconsidering the programme's involvement in Egypt where one needs to do much more in order to have an impact because of its much more diverse media scene ("this programme is too small a fish in such a big sea"); 3) improving Amman Net's ability to market the programme and its output so it has greater resonance in the countries it should continue covering; and 4) how to have greater impact and measure that impact in countries where this programme can and is starting to make a difference: Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.

4.3.4 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

On strategy

This project is a good start in encouraging peer review among journalists which is crucial to the unwanted alternative of governments regulating media professionals. There are limits of course to what Amman Net can do to foster debate on professional standards and develop a culture of self-critique and evaluation, it is after all a radio station.

In order to get the most out of IMS' investments in this project, Amman Net needs to make decisions about the added value of its work in some of the countries it is now engaged in and consider how to improve the impact of this programme on both journalists and the broader public.

The next 2 years should be used to improve this programme. After this, IMS might consider exploring whether there are additional ways it can foster peer review beyond support to this project alone.

On objectives and results

In general, the expectations for immediate objectives and results for this project are shared by both IMS and Amman Net. With regards to immediate objectives, the programme is clearly producing original material on a weekly basis, however it is impossible for IMS to understand the nature of this material or have a substantial discussion with Amman Net about them without the materials being translated into English or without IMS having an Arab-speaking consultant assist with this.

Also, while the project tries to encourage good practice as much as condemn bad practice (as stated in the project document), the reality is that good examples are still hard to come by. The wording of the third objective for this project, i.e. “journalists and the public in Middle East region integrated and better informed on media standards in the 5 countries” is not clear and seems too ambitious as an immediate objective (it is more of a long term goal) and should be re-considered.

With regards to results, as mentioned above, Amman Net has more anecdotal evidence of the programme’s impact on generating debate about professional standards in Jordan and Palestine and less in the other countries. This needs to be improved. The ability of the project to impact on “the greater public’s awareness of media professionalism” is an ambitious result and not a priority for Amman Net. Furthermore, such an impact is very difficult to measure. This objective should be re-considered because it is hard to measure such a result.

4.3.5 The partnership with IMS

In this component, IMS plays the role of funder and advisor.

The added value of IMS to Amman Net is clear. According to the director, “IMS gave us money and they did not interfere. There is a basis of trust that we appreciate... IMS respected the fact that Amman Net’s priority is to provide services to its local audience and did not impose for example that we publish our information in English.”

Though it is too early to know whether an exchange with Denmark will bear any fruits, Amman Net wants to take advantage of the expertise next year.

4.3.6 Recommendations for the future

Improve impact

Amman Net should reconsider the involvement of “Eye on the Arab Media” in Egypt and look carefully at how it can improve its marketing of the programme in countries it feels it can make a difference in, namely the Levant countries.

“Eye on the Arab Media” should be supported to publish some of its information on its website into English now that it is ready and eager to do so. This would fill the gap of English-language information on media issues available to an international audience and produced by organisations based in the region.

Keep Satellite TV on the radar screen

While Amman Net is not ready to include satellite TV in their media monitoring exercises, they believe it is an area that requires attention and should be discussed in the coming years.

4.3.7 Issues for IMS and Amman Net to consider

- What should the rationale and criteria be for deciding what countries Amman Net should be engaged in the next 2 years?
- Is it auspicious to include satellite TV to the media its monitors in the next 3 years?
- Who is the main target group of this project? How can Amman Net ensure greater impact of its programme on the target group?
- How can Amman Net better evaluate the outcome and effects of this project? And what resources does it need to achieve this?

4.4 Sub-component 1.3 Legal protection

4.4.1 Short Description

As limits to media freedom are increasingly challenged in the region, the need to strengthen journalists understanding of legal frameworks and for lawyers to defend journalists and media rights are an imperative. To address these issues, IMS is working with the Dutch media organisation, Free Voice, who are partnering with the Jordanian-based NGO, Centre for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ), to develop and implement a training and network-building project for lawyers throughout the Arab region. The objective of the project is to strengthen the knowledge and professional skills of lawyers so they can provide legal defence to media professionals and media organisations under attack.

4.4.2 Achievements

The participatory and thorough process Free Voice and CDFJ have chosen in assessing needs and in deciding how this programme should be shaped was commendable and valuable in developing a strong basis for such an ambitious regional programme. The Director of CDFJ is highly respected for his expertise in the field of media law and policy.

There had been no progress on the project that IMS has agreed to support in 2006. The plan is that by mid-2007, 30 lawyers from 6 countries will be trained to better defend journalists and freedom of expressions cases and 120 journalists in 6 countries will be trained to better understand media law and policies that govern their work.

4.4.3 Challenges

Lack of progress. There has been no progress on the legal protection project that IMS has agreed to support. The main reason for this, according to Free Voice, is that the project has been incorporated into a broader project that has a variety of other components and the timeline for the legal protection part of the project does not fit IMS's timelines. Also, the length of time it took to complete the assessment and discussions with the Arab media community in order to conceptualize the programme took well over a year. This meant that no progress was made on most of the activities that IMS expected would take place.

Effective management. Another challenge in the implementation of this project was the ability to identify a suitable coordinator for the broader CDFJ project. A coordinator has been identified and due to the size of this project, coordination will remain a challenge.

Misunderstandings around financing. Free Voice says they received mixed messages about what IMS was prepared to fund. This created misunderstandings between the 2 organisations and slowed down the transfer of funds. This issue has since been resolved.

4.4.4 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

Legal defence and enhancing journalists understanding of their role in society and the laws and policies governing their work is essential. Journalists are still being jailed for exercising their profession. While the reviewer was in the region, editors in Yemen and Jordan received prison sentences for publishing the cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

While there is agreement between IMS and its partners on the immediate objectives and results as stated in the project documents, some of the objectives will need to be revised because they will not be achieved in the next year, namely relating to regional cooperation in the area of legal aid. The results as they are currently stated seem too ambitious given the delays in implementation and the overall short time frame of this project. Alternatively, the timeframe should be revised for the project overall.

4.4.5 The partnership with IMS

IMS is appreciated for its good faith efforts to cooperate and in avoiding duplication of efforts with other international NGOs working in the Arab region. Free Voice would like more information about the other programmes IMS is engaged in because they could be useful resources for other aspects of Free Voice's programmes. They would welcome more regular contact with IMS because they see the need in sharing information and experiences.

4.4.6 Recommendations for the future

IMS needs to be clear to Free Voice and CDFJ about its expectations for progress regarding this project in 2007. A mutual agreement needs to be forged between all parties involved.

4.4.7 Issues for IMS and FreeVoice/CDFJ to consider

- What objectives and results should this programme have, given the challenges in implementation experienced so far?
- What does IMS need to see happen in order to build its confidence about the further implementation of this project? What does this mean for further agreements that need to be made between Free Voice and CDFJ regarding mutual rights and obligations around this project?

4.5 Component 2: Strengthening Journalists' Unions and Associations⁵

4.5.1 Short Description

While most Arab countries and Iran have journalists' unions and associations, many of these organisations are weak and politicised while others are in the process of

⁵ The evaluator was only able to interview one of the four DUJ trainers involved in this project.

reformulating their mission and expanding their activities. No matter the circumstance, they all face the common challenge of being effective and independent organisations that work for the professional rights and improvement of working conditions of their members and constituency.

Because many of these organisations are already members of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), IMS appointed the IFJ as the overall implementing partner in this project which aims to build the capacities of journalists unions and associations in the Arab region. This project serves as a means to help build the capacity needed to transform unions and syndicates from monopolies of power to becoming member-oriented and service-minded organisations advocating for and protecting the interests of its members. The Danish Union of Journalists (DUJ) has allocated four of its members, who are experts in collective bargaining, to work with the IFJ to deliver the training component of this project.

4.5.2 Achievements

This project is also breaking new ground. The innovative nature of this project lies in the fact that never before has IFJ included directly the expertise of a member organisation in the implementations of a project as is the case with the DUJ.

The DUJ highly values its involvement in this project because of the Union's interest in having an international engagement with other unions around the world. The DUJ trainer interviewed said she gained invaluable experience that can be used in future international activities of the DUJ and has built a relationship with the Union in Bahrain that she hopes to maintain in the long-term.

Though little has progressed in 2006, it seems that the project has been given new life since a meeting between the IMS, DUJ and IFJ took place a few months ago. In January, missions are planned to the key countries Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen and Iran, and planning is underway between the Danish union members and their partners in the Arab region for further workshops. One of the Danish trainers says there has been more communication in the last month than there has been in the last year.

4.5.3 Challenges

Following a successful inception phase (in 2005), during which the DUJ representatives initiated cooperation with journalist syndicates in four countries and organised initial workshops on association-building, the project has not progressed in the last year.

Delays in implementation are due to a variety of factors:

Delays in contracting. Due to a variety of misunderstandings around budgetary rules and regulations between the two organisations, a project document budget was only approved in July 2006.

Working in highly volatile political environments. As a rule, working with national journalists unions is difficult. The unions are more often than not politicised bodies: many of their members work for state-owned entities or media owned by political parties. This means that the politics struggles at national level are often played out within the unions' governance structures and makes implementation often difficult.

According to DUJ, the Danish cartoon crisis also caused delays in implementation. The 4 Danish trainers were afraid to travel to the region until the aftermath of the crisis died down.

The relationship between the IFJ and the Arab Federation of Journalists, a regional umbrella organisation of national unions and associations, were also strained for some time, though, according to the IFJ representative, relationships have since been mended.

Lack of communication between IFJ and the DUJ. Though the union members were able to complete planned assessments and implement initial workshops, insufficient communication at the start of the project meant that there were eventual misunderstandings between the IFJ and the Danish experts around the division of roles and responsibilities between the two organisations and differences in perception regarding the roles and responsibilities of each participating organisation. More background information on the political situation and the unions from the IFJ side would have also helped the Danish union members be better prepared for their missions. It seems that the previous programme officer for this project had many other project responsibilities and the communication with the DUJ fell through the cracks as a result.

Doubts about impact. One Danish union member interviewed⁶ raised doubts about the impact of the project. Though she has not faced the similar political divisions and obstacles as her colleagues have with other Unions in other countries, she says the ultimate interests of the Bahraini Union of Journalists to work with IFJ was not to receive support on building its union or association which is what this project offers, but instead on professional development and training. “They are prepared to accept anything because they are desperate to have contact with international organisations. Even though our initial workshop was well attended and we were both enthusiastic about the results, I am doubtful whether this is worth it because I cannot respond to their real immediate needs.”

4.5.4 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

Local trade unions or associations should, in practice, play a very important role in defending and protecting the interests of media workers. However, even the more reform-minded organisations are hard to work with and unpredictable and therefore progress and impact are usually slow and hard to measure. It is important that there be continuity in this project: that the Danish trainers can remain engaged since, in most cases, they have developed relationships with the local actors and have been the main driving force in this project.

While there is agreement between IMS and the IFJ on the immediate objectives and results as stated in the project document, many of them seem far too ambitious and broad for a project of this nature. They should be reviewed and revised. The IFJ says it is hard to know until next year whether the project is on track despite the delays. It is unclear what initiatives and activities the local Unions have taken up that were part of the national action plans. Regional cooperation has not yet taken place but a proposal by the IFJ will be discussed with Arab partners in January 2007. The 5th objective which concerns “the evolution of social, legal and professional status of journalists” seems over ambitious and is more of a long-term result than an objective.

4.5.5 The partnership with IMS

In this component, the IMS has mainly played a funding, advisory and broker role. The project is being coordinated by the IFJ and the DUJ is helping deliver workshops at local level.

⁶ Only one of the 4 Danish trainers could be interviewed.

For the DUJ, the IMS has been an important mediator between them and the IFJ. They would like the IMS, as the outside “eye,” to take more of a role in managing the ambitions of this project. IMS is also appreciated for the important advice and guidance it provides on overall project management and development that the DUJ has little experience with.

For the IFJ, the IMS has served as an open, clear partner and useful sounding board. “They are not just a donor. They know what they are talking about and are critical. They have also been helpful at problem solving.”

4.5.6 Recommendations for the future

Improve communication between the IFJ and the trainers

More opportunities should be created for face-to-face meetings and planning between the DUJ and the IFJ. There should be an opportunity for the 4 Danish experts and the IFJ to share experiences and evaluate progress in each project so far. The trainer interviewed would appreciate more regular feedback from the IFJ, particularly regarding the requests made by the local union which she is not able to fulfil.

Monitor results carefully after one year

Because there has been inactivity during the better part of a year, it is too early to judge the potential of this project. Fortunately, there are clear implementation plans for 2007 and evidence that activities are in motion. The project needs an additional year to show what it can achieve. A thorough review should take place after a year to determine progress and IMS’s future interest or involvement in this project. IMS, the IFJ and DUJ should be clear about mutual expectations for the coming year.

4.6 Component 3: Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism

4.6.1 Short Description

For journalists in the Arab region, investigative reporting represents a potential for practising their profession in a way that challenges the status quo, thus being the ultimate test of the degree of freedom of the press in any given country. The objective of the project is to establish a regional platform for investigative journalism, which has as its primary objective to support journalists in undertaking investigative reporting and assisting journalists in publishing their investigative reports in local, regional and international media, thus ensuring broad public dissemination of their work.

Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) was formed as a network with a board and a small secretariat placed in Amman, Jordan. From there, ARIJ is preparing training workshops and coaching of journalists, initially from Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. In the long term, ARIJ will be producing models of ‘best practices’ and intends to advocate for the need for building a culture of investigative reporting in the Arab region.

4.6.2 Achievements

This organisation is breaking new ground because there is little experience and understanding of investigative journalism in the region. Its success lies not only in its innovation but in the “menu” it offers. As one board member explained, “we are not just frying an egg but making a whole meal.” Trainings normally available to

journalists in the region are parachuted in. The programme offers journalists a sabbatical to work on one story in depth and during that time are offered a salary, paid expenses related to the investigation, training, coaching as well as legal counsel before the article is finalised and presented to an editor for publication.

So far, 2 investigations have been published, 3 are on their way to being published, and 18 are “in the pipeline.” A total of 31 journalists have participated in three rounds of workshops and 4 coaches are involved in the project. The ARIJ board also provided anecdotal evidence of how the investigations have had an impact in their respective countries. An investigation on drug abuse is being used by a local university as a case study at their faculty of media and communication. Another story on Bab Al Tabbaneh, a neglected neighbourhood in North Lebanon, where many young drug addicts practice auto-mutilation before turning to Muslim fundamentalists, prompted the American University in Beirut to map out the area and the Red Cross to look into ways of improving medical services there.

Though they are still a “new kid on the block,” ARIJ has generated interest and it has been approached by several institutions, either asking ARIJ to deliver training or newspapers asking to have access to the programme. These include the United Arab Emirates Association of Journalists in Dubai and Abu Dhabi; a USAID funded programme that is training journalists covering human rights and rule of law issues in the region; the regional office of Al-Hayat newspaper and Lebanon’s oldest private newspaper, AnNahar.

Finally, in this short period of time, ARIJ has managed to get on the international “circuit” of investigative reporters. Its former executive director and now board member has participated in a conference of a similar programme called “Scoop” which is being implemented in Eastern Europe. There she able to establish important contacts with similar initiatives outside the Arab region. Graduates of ARIJ training participated in the biannual conference of the International Association of Investigative Reporters in 2006 and another five will participate in a 2007 meeting.

4.6.3 Challenges

Building a common vision. Like any new initiative, ARIJ faces many challenges. Since investigative journalism is a new concept, it starts with developing a vision for investigative journalism in the region. This means creating a common understanding among board members, trainers, coaches and participating journalists on the concept of investigative journalism.

Creating incentives for participation. The more practical challenge they face is getting journalists and their editors motivated and committed to the concept of investigative journalism. Editors are hesitant to release staff to dedicate time to just one story, for example. To build their confidence in this project, ARIJ needs to further sensitize editors on the value of investigative journalism. For the editor, the “proof of the pudding” will be in the degree of heightened professionalism his/her journalist demonstrates after having participated in an ARIJ programme.

Attracting talent. It has been a challenge for ARIJ to attract quality and dedicated journalists to this project. The coaches who live and work in the countries of focus can play an important role here in promoting ARIJ. This was the case recently in Syria where there were 15 applicants for the current training, but this is not always the case. Journalists are in general poorly paid, often work for several newspapers, and the risk is

that the opportunity ARIJ offers is used more as a money maker than a opportunity to learn and write an important story.

Ensuring the quality of coaches. The coaches play a key role in the services ARIJ provides and the outputs it creates. Ideally, they serve as the representatives of ARIJ at a national level. As they are a key component in the food chain of this project, more attention and resources need to be invested in upgrading the skills of coaches and in inducting coaches to ARIJ and their role in the project.

Organisational development. Other challenges rest at the organisational level.

There has been staff turnover in a relatively short period of time but fortunately the first executive director has remained engaged with the organisation as a board member. A new executive director is on trial and is up for a performance evaluation by the board in early 2007. Induction and passing on of institutional memory is crucial which is the role of the former Executive Director and board members to ensure.

Due to the politics in the region and the differences in culture and working styles of board members coming not only from various countries in the region but also from Denmark, the board has not always functioned as a united force. This said, according to other board members, the Danish members provide important professional input, are dedicated and motivated and add "neutrality and sense," and "help us as outsiders to see things that we are not able to see." Developing understanding among board members around roles and responsibilities and agreeing to working rules, principles and values are an area that required attention and should continue in future.

4.6.4 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

With regards to strategy, it was a bold step for all parties involved to have decided to build a new regional institution around a new vision and concept in the region. It is a risky choice to make that many funding organizations shy away from. It is important that some international organisations, like IMS, are prepared to support innovation and start-ups that have no previous track record.

Due to the set-up of the organisation, a regional secretariat with no presence at the national level, ARIJ faces special challenges in taking root at the national level and attracting participation. The coaches play a potentially important role in ARIJ that has yet to be exploited to its fullest.

Overall, however, the view is that IMS and the ARIJ board made a conscious choice to "plant an olive tree rather than a tomato plant. The tomato plant will come and go but the olive tree will ensure that you are fed for 100 years." The importance of investing in the development of local structures cannot be stressed enough.

The added value of the regional nature of the initiative is not yet fully evident in the outputs of ARIJ. There are opportunities for cross-border investigations however.

The immediate objectives as stated in the project document are in line with the expectations of all key parties and with what has been achieved to date.

With regards to results, they are in line with the long-term vision of the board. The results as they are formulated in the IMS programme document are difficult to measure and it is not clear what systems are in place to enable such measurements to take place.

4.6.5 The partnership with IMS

In this component, IMS provides funds to ARIJ, serves as a non-voting member of the ARIJ board and until recently provided temporary administrative support.

According to ARIJ's chairman, IMS is a "joint venture partner. We share a common vision and they have the capital to invest in making that vision come true. They have never bossed us around."

Tensions arose between IMS and ARIJ during the first few months of the project. ARIJ's legal registration had not yet been finalised, so it was agreed that IMS provide temporary support during this period. The rules and regulations around the use of funds and accountability for funds imposed by the MFA onto IMS and onto ARIJ also created tensions. According to the former executive director, "the rules do not fit the reality of the context we are working in." Now that ARIJ has adequate professional support with regards to financial management, these tensions appear to have largely subsided.

4.6.6 Recommendations for the future

The long-term vision for ARIJ is that it aspires to be a pan-Arab organisation with involvement and a presence in many countries through the region. Ultimately, the board believes ARIJ should be an umbrella body that supports and unites national "chapters" who define their own needs.

In the short-term, recommendations are:

Ensure that ARIJ's "machinery" works

Given that ARIJ is such a small organisation, its success depends on a handful of individuals: namely its executive director and the coaches it employs. In addition to her obvious roles and responsibilities, the executive director needs to play a stronger role in lobbying editors and journalists. More resources need to be invested in upgrading the professionalism of coaches and in furthering their understanding of the aims of ARIJ and their role in it. A workshop for the coaches which was planned in Denmark should take place and yearly reunions for coaches should be organised. The training manual needs to be finalised and translated into English.

Creating incentives

Develop an annual prize which can serve as an incentive both for journalists and editors to get involved with ARIJ. ARIJ could consider a periodic reunion of graduates in order to share experiences and begin to create a sense of community. Funds should be secured to enable top investigative journalists from the Arab region to attend international gatherings for investigative journalists.

Record achievements

ARIJ should more consistently record the outcomes and impact of articles published and of training provided to participants. This information could be published on the ARIJ website for example.

Develop a multi year strategic plan

ARIJ would benefit from developing a multi-year strategic plan which will help the board and the executive director to develop a common view for the future and set agreed to goals for the organisation. It may require outside support to do so.

4.6.7 Issues for IMS and ARIJ to consider

- What support does ARIJ need, if any, with regards to its organisational development? What training, mentoring or other support is required in connection with organisational management or board development for example? Does ARIJ need support to develop a multi-year strategic plan?
- What does ARIJ wish to prioritise in the next 3 years and what implications does that have for its budget?
- What planning, monitoring and/or evaluation systems does it have in place? What support does it need in order to ensure better quality control of its work?
- Where does ARIJ need to invest more time and resources in order to attract more quality journalists?

4.7 Component 4: Partnership for Co-production and Exchange between Public Broadcasters

4.7.1 Short project description

With the proliferation of private Pan Arab satellite channels, state broadcasters in the Arab region are more than ever challenged to provide their decreasing audience share with entertaining programming paving the way for a transition from government mouth pieces to public service providers. To date, radio and television stations in the region remain state-owned and in most countries, legislation for public broadcasting is non-existent.

In order to encourage such reforms within the state broadcasting sector, the IMS programme has adopted a strategy that builds partnerships (regionally and with Denmark) to improve standards and programme formats through co-production of children's television. This strategy takes advantage of Denmark's strong tradition and expertise in the field and of Arab broadcasters who are interested in improving their programming for children.

Along with production and exchange of children's TV programmes, the project envisions initiating discussions between broadcasters, civil society representatives and academics about public service ideals, specifically regarding production of better quality programmes for children. This project was created with a view to allow for the eventual integration of other programme genres and countries in the future.

4.7.2 Achievements

Adjustments made since the January 2006 evaluation

In 2005, 6 children's films were produced as part of production exchange between DR, Syrian and Jordan Television. Following a January 2006 evaluation of this project, adjustments were made to the initial strategy of the project. As a result, IMS shifted the focus of the project from children to youth programming, and adapted the implementation strategy as well as the nature of the involvement of Danish Radio and Television (DR). It is important to note that youth programming had been identified as a need and a request from the Arab TV stations since the start of the project.

The project shifted from a model of co-production of children's programs between Danish, Syrian and Jordanian national broadcasters to the production of a youth

programme with Syria and Jordan with the use of *in situ* trainers contracted by IMS to serve as executive producers as well as mentors and trainers with a local team in each country. Due to the political situation in Lebanon, it has been impossible to work with Lebanese TV, which was part of the original plan. IMS therefore decided to work with a group of independent film makers to support the group producing short segments about Lebanese youth for possible use in the Jordanian and Syrian programmes and to produce a documentary that may eventually be broadcast on DR.

At the time of this review, two pilot youth programmes have been produced in Jordan and Syria, respectively. Jordanian TV management has approved the pilot and has agreed to start a weekly 1/2 hour program to be broadcast as of January 2007 and that will apply formats and the production model used in the initial project. The programmes will continue to be produced by the team trained by IMS consultant.

Discussions are also under way within Jordanian TV to establish a children's and youth programme department by June 2007. In Syria, progress was hampered by the Lebanon-Israeli crisis following which TV-Syria tight restrictions on access to its premises for non-staff members. This led to delays and TV Syria has yet to provide feedback on the pilot programme or on its future plans with regards to youth programming.

The shift in strategy and content focus was commendable. While producing the expected outputs, i.e. six children's films that met DR standards, the January 2006 evaluation of this project revealed that its implementation strategy was not conducive for meeting any of the other objectives of the project which is why it was abandoned in favour of the present approach. All participants interviewed are extremely enthusiastic and motivated about the project.

Outcomes of the project since June 2006

Participants interviewed⁷ shared their views on what outcomes the programme has had to date:

From the perspective of the production team members interviewed⁸

"I discovered myself and my talents in this project... The most important things is that we learned to work on all aspects of a production like developing storylines, filing, and editing, etc. This is not how we normally work."

"We now love what we do! No one is telling us what to do and how to do it. We have more freedom in our choices and that makes us take more responsibility for what we do."

"We are better equipped to solve technical and other problems we face in our work."

"We have learned to work in a team and about team spirit. Everyone on the team is clear about what we want and we are all working towards the same goal."

From the perspective of Jordanian TV management

⁷ Most of the individuals interviewed were participants of the 2nd phase of this project and not the first phase. A thorough evaluation of the first phase was conducted thus there was no need to look at the first phase with any degree of detail.

⁸ The reviewer was only able to interview the Jordanian production team.

The Director for Training and Development at Jordanian TV is extremely enthusiastic about the project as well as the *in situ* trainer. Not only does she like the quality of the programme but youth programming is entirely new ground for Jordanian TV. She seeks longer-term cooperation with IMS in helping establish a children and youth programming department and in further supporting the professionalisation of the staff.

From the trainers' perspective

The value of this project, unlike in its first phase, lies in the fact that it is not imposing a Western way of making programming but bringing professionals from different cultures with varying levels of experience together to create a new experience in youth programming.

The trainers have seen great change in the production teams. Not only have their existing technical skills improved but they have also developed new skills such as editing, using a camera, and structuring a story. Their behaviour and attitudes have also changed: they are able to work as part of a team with a common purpose (which is uncustomary for the culture of TV production in the region) and take pride in their work which enhances their performance.

From DR's perspective

The great success of the initial children's project was that it is the first time that DR worked together in a partnership to produce a children's programme that would then be broadcast in all three countries. Most importantly, "it is the first time that Danish children will see images of the Middle East that does not include war and conflict.

4.7.3 Challenges

Impact of the first phase of the project. The skills and knowledge base of those involved in the first project increased. The hope of creating a lasting exchange between the production teams in Syria and Jordan has not yet materialised. There is at least one participant from the first phase of the project involved in the current youth programme production initiative.

The initial idea was to broadcast the children's programmes on all three TV stations simultaneously. This did not occur for a variety of technical and scheduling reasons. The programme was broadcast twice on DR at the end of 2006 and will be broadcast on Jordanian and Syrian TV in early 2007.

The first phase did enable relationship building between DR, IMS and the 2 broadcasters which paved the way for the current project which seems to have more long-term opportunities.

DR's level of involvement. According to DR, after 2006, it will be harder to involve the Danish broadcaster in a project of this nature unless there is a production component that DR can broadcast itself. DR's involvement until now was possible largely because the Middle East was a special theme in 2006. This said, the staff person who has been leading this project at DR is personally very committed to working with TV stations in the Arab region and is willing to encourage DR to maintain its involvement but to do so it will need to include productions that fit DR's quality standards.

In the second phase of the project, DR's involvement has shifted considerably. While DR helped identify one of the trainers (who was a DR employee at the time), both trainers are currently working as freelancers contracted by IMS. DR provides guidance and feedback to one of the trainers and facilitated a learning visit by each of the

production teams in Denmark. The continued involvement and added value of DR is tenuous and depends on future production directions taken in this project that fit DR's interests.

Reliance on IMS. IMS is the key driving force of this project. The partners in this project rely on IMS to coordinate the project and carry out all administrative and logistical aspects. Furthermore, IMS' representative in Amman played a crucial role in negotiating and developing this project with the 3 broadcasters. IMS has provided all the equipment and its offices in Amman have been used as a production and editing suite. In Syria particularly, the project suffered because of the lack of working facilities and equipment made available by Syrian TV as is stipulated in agreements. The trainer therefore had to spend precious time on logistics rather than on his core functions.

Measuring performance and added value of trainers. Due to the crucial role the *in situ* trainers play in this project and should their involvement be prolonged, IMS needs to gauge the performance and added value of the trainers from the perspective of the production teams and TV stations. This feedback is often difficult to get because of the lack of relationship IMS has directly with individuals on the production teams, management at the TV stations, and insecurities about giving such feedback in local culture.

The Lebanese component. Despite IMS' good intentions of remaining engaged in Lebanon, it is unclear what longer-term result is sought from the Lebanese component and how it truly integrates into this overall project.

4.7.4 The partnership with IMS

In this component, IMS provides funding, manages the project and its logistics and administration and makes overall decisions about the direction of the project.

According to Arab partners and Danish trainers, IMS played an integral part in helping shape the project: "taking an idea and shaping it into a project with us."

IMS' representative in Amman played the crucial role of the "bullet man," i.e. the party that negotiated with the directorship and management of the broadcasters to make this project a reality.

For the trainer based in Amman, IMS served as an important sounding board and provided him with clear direction. For the trainer based in Damascus, he felt that IMS did not provide the back up that he needed or any feedback on his reports and work.

4.7.5 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

The choice of using children's and youth programming as an entry point to work with public broadcasters in the region seems to have been successful. Danish expertise has something to offer in this area and the Jordanian and Syrian television stations had an interest in further developing their programming in these areas. There is excitement around the youth programme because it is breaking new ground for them and may help them increase their audience share which has diminished greatly due to the competition from satellite television station.

The model used in the first phase of the project was not effective despite the quality outputs according to the January 2006 evaluation, and has been rightly adjusted and so far it seems to be successful. However, the level of ownership and involvement of DR TV has changed and thus the co-production and exchange aspect between the Danes and Arab partners has shifted.

There is common understanding and agreement on the immediate objectives and results of this project. However, as a result of the shift in the project, several of the immediate objectives and result areas need to be revised. The objectives and results around regional cooperation seem not have materialised so far and may need to be adjusted. The plan to initiate discussions between broadcasters, civil society representatives and academics about public service ideals has never taken off. Measuring achievements linked to some of the result areas will be difficult to measure and there is no evidence of a system in place to do this.

4.7.6 Recommendations for the future

Decide on DR's involvement

Since the project has shifted somewhat from the initial concept, IMS and DR need to reconsider what its involvement should and can be overall. DR and the TV stations' interest in exploring the possibility of a co-production of the existing Danish children's programme called "Sebastian" in Jordan and Syria should be further explored. The idea to facilitate a discussion and sharing of experiences between the 2 public broadcasters at management level should also be pursued.

IMS' management of project

Now that IMS' representative in Amman has left his position, IMS needs to replace him with someone who can play the important brokering role that this project demands if it will continue. According to partners, they need someone who understands Arab culture, is a good negotiator, understands the mentality of state broadcasters and will ensure consistent administrative and coordination support with all the parties involved. Given the crucial role IMS plays in all aspects of this programme, it needs to consider what role it should play in the longer-term and ensure that it builds this into choices it makes in the further implementation of this project.

Need for clear and firm commitments from partners in Jordan and Syria

For the successful continuation of this project, Jordan and Syrian TV need to make clear commitments that they are prepared to incorporate youth programming into their regular programming and make human and financial resources as well as space and equipment available in order to produce these programmes. What's more Syrian TV needs to make regular access available to foreign trainers who are overseeing the project.

The Lebanese component

The Lebanese involvement in this project is weak and a rationale for future continuation needs to be clearly articulated.

4.7.7 Issues for IMS and its partners to consider

- What is the long-term institutional commitment of DR in this project? What should its involvement be?
- What is the long-term institutional commitment of Jordanian and Syrian Television to youth programming? What can they guarantee in the short-term?
- What is the vision for the Lebanese involvement in this project? What adjustments need to be made, if any, with regards to the strategy?
- How can IMS improve its ability to measure the performance of trainers in Amman and Damascus?
- Who within IMS will continue coordinating this project and maintain relationships with the key stakeholders? What is IMS' long-term vision regarding its role in coordinating this project?

4.8 Component 5: The Arab-Danish Partnership for Documentary Film

4.8.1 Short description

Independent documentary filmmaking does not have a strong tradition in the Arab World and critical, independent views are a rarity. There is, however, a growing interest in the field. Inexpensive broadcast quality equipment has made film production far more accessible. There is a pool of talent in the Arab World and an increasing number of interesting films come out every year.

The short-term aim of this project is to provide training courses for talented Arabic filmmakers offered by Arabic, Danish and international documentary professionals as well as to facilitate the production of films during a nine-month course cycle.

The longer-term objective is to develop an Arab Institute of Film (AIF). The Institute will address issues related to financing and distribution as well as questions concerning the development of a conducive environment for independent film-making in the Arab World.

4.8.2 Achievements

This project has exceeded expectations of both the Arab and Danish participants I interviewed. Mr. Jakob Høgel -- a successful Danish film producer, a founding member of the Arab Film Institute (AFI) and key resource person for AIF -- was initially reluctant to get involved in the project because of the challenges of working in the region. Today he is so enthusiastic about the project, largely due to the devotion and dynamism of those involved, that he says he sometimes prioritises this project over his production company.

According to one of the founders of the Arab Film Institute (AFI), most other “donor” supported initiatives destined to developing documentary film in the region “are much like Bedouins, you find no trace of them” once they have taken place. The success in the view of the 2 local founding fathers of the project is that it has from the start delivered several tangibles: a regional institute independent of any governmental entity with its own infrastructure and equipment. Since its inception, the AIF has been able to involve documentary film talent from the Arab region and Denmark to provide vision

and experience in shaping the Institute as well as skills and expertise for the training programme and in mentoring fellows in their individual productions.

While the first productions resulting from the training workshops have not yet been completed, many are hopeful of the quality of the output expected. If all goes as planned, the AIF will have produced 8 quality documentaries from 5 different countries in 2006. By July 2007, the plan is to have a total of 18 documentaries made.

Two of the Danish trainers interviewed commented on the importance of the “brotherhood” that was created during the trainings between the filmmakers from different countries. This was important in forging a “network of references” that can trust each other and eventually work together. After all documentary film makers remain an oddity in their own societies and isolated.

4.8.3 Challenges

Who is in charge of what, why and how? The capacity of the Institute to manage itself and the way IMS and AIF have responded to this issue so far has been a core challenge in this project.

As a result of a mutual agreement made on the basis of circumstance, convenience and trust, the IMS Middle East programme director at the time⁹ was asked in the Spring 2006 to serve as interim manager of the Institute. He also continued to maintain his position at IMS and hold responsibility for overseeing other projects, namely component 4. No suitable candidate for Executive Director had been found by that time and the Institute was (and still is) run under the guidance of the Institute’s founders, neither of whom reside in Jordan.

This situation led to great conflicts and tensions between the IMS representative and the AIF founding fathers around how decisions were taken, on transparency around budget allocations and expenditures, equipment purchases and the use of AIF premises and equipment by individuals involved in other projects supported by IMS. On one side, the AIF representatives felt they had lost all decision-making power and ownership of the Institute during this period, on the other, the IMS representative took it upon himself to get the job done because he often did not agree or trust the decisions the founding fathers made or he was unable to get them to make decisions. By the end of it, “I had no choice but to be accountable to myself,” he said. Tensions between the IMS representative and the AIF founding fathers grew to such an extent that the former stepped down from the interim position in August 2006.

Delays in constituting an independent entity. IMS, on the other hand, is concerned about the fact that the AIF board has not yet met and constituted itself and that no executive director is yet in place. The Institute may exist formally on paper (*de jure*) but *de facto* it is largely governed and managed by two individuals. This is an undesirable situation because of lack of checks and balances in place. This concern was also echoed by staff of the production houses that were interviewed.

The AIF founding fathers explain that individuals have been nominated and contacted and a physical meeting is planned for February 2007. Meetings have been postponed twice since February 2006 because of the lack of communication with IMS during the cartoon crisis and other practical and logistical problems.

⁹ Mr. Waseem Mahmoud resigned from his position with IMS in November 2006.

At the time of this report, a part-time finance officer and a part-time fundraiser were hired by AIF. The latter is seen as a potential future Executive Director of the Institute.

Lack of clarity of purpose among various players. Several individuals involved in the project, such as trainers and representatives of production houses, raised questions about what the first training/production programme was trying to achieve. The main question that arose was: is the project helping semi-professionals to make a professional film or semi-professional filmmakers to make a semi-professional film? It is important to ensure that all involved in the training programme agree on a common objective in order to be more effective.

Attracting quality. The founding fathers expected many more applicants for the first round of training than they received. They only received about 40 applications when they expected to receive at least 100. The quality of the final participants varied greatly.

Logistics. Several individuals interviewed complained of the lack of proper organisation of the workshops. One student was notified a day before she was supposed to travel and missed 4 days of training as a result because she was unable to secure a visa in time. Equipment that had been promised to a production house was never made available.

4.8.4 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

With regards to setting up a regional Institute

While most individuals interviewed believe that establishing a new independent and regional body for documentary film is commendable, there seem to be conflicting views about what the region actually needs: a film school (offering a multi-year curriculum) or an Institute that provides an array of services including short-term workshops and an archive for example?

The decision to forge on with training programs while the Institute was not yet fully established (the board had not yet been constituted and a “managerial” crisis ensued) was undoubtedly a very important decision. It helped create positive energy that enabled to keep all parties on board and committed. The quality and appropriateness of choices made around the first cycle of training will only come to light during an evaluation which is to take place before the next training/production cycle begins.

With regards to a Danish/Arab exchange

Both Danish and Arab individuals have expressed great benefit in and appreciation for the opportunity to work together. The Arab founding fathers have benefited from the expertise and experience of both Danish board members. Jakob Høgel in particular has become a trusted ally and implementer. The Danish Film Institute offers a model for the way AIF wishes to function. The founding fathers welcome the continued involvement and relationships with Danish individuals and institutions in the long-term.

The Arab initiators of the project want to rethink how best to use the Danish trainers (or tutors) in future. Many fellows need special technical advice but some also need support around looking critically on the issues dealt with in their films (local political and social issues) as well as how to work in repressive environments and how to deal with generational issues in interviews, etc. These are some of the needs of fellows that only a tutor who knows the context and culture are able to fill. The Institute’s founders also believe that they should try to support, involve and encourage regional talent as much as

possible and the priority should be in finding suitable tutors from the region whenever possible. This said, they value the involvement of Danish expertise so far and seek to retain it and make best use of it as possible.

On immediate objectives and results

In general, there is harmony and agreement between IMS and the Institute on what AIF should be achieving in the long-term and its immediate objectives. Where there needs to be adjustments is regarding the establishment of a film fund. This will not be achieved during this programme phase but instead is a desired objective for the next phase of the programme. Furthermore, while developing an archive of documentary film and preserving earlier works are part of the long-term plan for AIF, these two objectives will only be realised in the longer term and should not be priorities for the second two-year phase of the programme.

4.8.5 The partnership with IMS

In this component, the IMS staff member in Jordan served as interim director of AIF for several months.

While the relationship between the Institute's founding fathers and IMS' former representative in the Arab region appears to be irreparably damaged, the AIF founders say their trust and appreciation for IMS continues.

4.8.6 Recommendations for the future

Ensure its machinery is in place

In the coming year, AIF needs to get its governance structure in place and operational and needs to decide and act on its staffing needs in order to be able to work most effectively. IMS should stop filling in the administrative gaps for AIF entirely as of 2008.

Reflecting on initial experiences

AIF should ensure that time and a system is put in place that enables the trainers and trainees to more thoroughly reflect on the training programme once it has been completed. Adjustments that have already been identified will need to be decided on and implemented. For example, more time needs to be built into the training process at every stage and the relationship with some of the production houses may also need to be revisited. AIF also wants to be more thorough in choosing fellows for the next round of training. This entails not only reviewing applications but travelling to the region to meet and interview applicants in some circumstances. Because there may not be such a big pool of candidates to choose from, it is often about sniffing out talent rather than attracting already accomplished individuals.

4.8.7 Issues for IMS and its partners to consider

- Until an AIF director is hired, who provides overall day-to-day management of the institute? Are roles and responsibilities clear? What help does AIF's founding fathers and current staff need in order to further develop the institution and function properly?
- What assurances do IMS need in order to be confident that AFI is able to manage itself? What mutual rights and obligations need to be discussed and agreed on in the next phase of this project?

4.9 Component 6: Strengthening Inter-Cultural Dialogue and Media Freedom Exchange through media cooperation and exchange

4.9.1 Short Description

The twinning and exchange between Danish and Arab media aims firstly, to make coverage of the region in Danish media more multifaceted and less stereotypical and to nuance Arab and Iranian coverage of life in the West. Secondly, it aims to encourage mutual professional inspiration at all levels -- between journalists, editors or media managers -- in a number of professional areas. So far, 18 twinning projects have been supported from within all fields of media between journalists from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Danish partners from all corners of the media industry.

4.9.2 Achievements

In general, participants¹⁰ interviewed had mostly positive feedback on the benefits of the collaborations and on how the programme has been developed and managed to date. The Syrian participants in particular praised this project over other twinning programmes that are on offer in the region, namely by the European Commission. This twinning project sets itself apart because of its flexibility and attempt to create exchanges tailor-made to the needs and interests of both parties.

The participants were unanimous in attributing the success of their "twinning" to the high level of professionalism of the participants on both sides. This enabled an equal working relationship between participants which is fundamental to any twinning programme. One Arab participant attributed the success in finding professional counterparts because of the use of a knowledgeable "mediator" who, in this case, is a Danish film maker whom they trusted and who is greatly respected and connected in Denmark.

For half the participants interviewed, success was based on 80% professionalism and 20% chemistry. For the other half, it was 50/50. It is important to note that 2 out of 3 Danish participants had worked in the Middle East region before. None of the Arab journalists interviewed had ever worked with Danish counterparts.

As stated earlier, the programme was also praised for its flexibility. The twinings were shaped according to the needs of each particular case and in one project, the Arab

¹⁰ Due to the fact that a full-fledged review of the twinning programme will take place in early 2007, this review only included 3 twinning projects out of the total of 14 that have taken place.

participant was able to choose its partner based on visits and interviews it held with prospective Danish counterparts and vice versa.

The impact of the twinning projects on participants included:

- Because of the personal and professional relationships they developed and increased knowledge and understanding of the region they gained, all participants wish to remain professionally and in some cases personally engaged the Middle East for the long term.
- If they have the opportunity to work with their counterparts again, they would.
- The approach to the subject matter in a project changed and as a result the project became richer, deeper and more nuanced. For example, a project which was initially intended to be about music from the Middle East became a project about identity.
- Breaking down stereotypes, whether it be stereotypes about journalists from developing countries or stereotypes about the Middle East. “I became less of a voyeur and more of a participant in that society because I worked along side a local day-in and day-out for weeks.”
- The twinning gave the Syrian participants a chance to break through the restricted production opportunities they have in Syria. They now have a credible European counterpart that will not only help attract investments but also ensure that they are not taken advantage of when negotiating with international production companies and broadcasters.
- According to one of the Lebanese participants, “it is my first time in 15 years of work that I am working with journalists from other parts of the world without an agenda being forced on me. The partners created the project together based on our own terms.”
- In two of the twinings, professional skills were enhanced.

4.9.3 Challenges

The administrative set up of placing the programme under the umbrella of two separate organisations -- DCCD and IMS -- did not add value to its implementation. Both organisations requested the coordinators to spend alternate weeks in their offices in order to try to “integrate” the project into each of the organisations. The set up had the opposite effect and the coordinators simply felt they were playing musical chairs to please their sponsors. IMS also considered the arrangement unproductive. A separate entity (DAMF – the Danish Arab Media Forum) was created to manage the project under the umbrella of the 2 organisations and this created unnecessary confusion with partners.

The success of this project lies in the ability of the coordinators to facilitate a strong match between 2 individuals or institutions and in the two being able to build a basis of trust on which to build the exchange. In order to do this well, each twinning requires high investments of time and planning in its conception phase. While benchmarks for a maximum number of projects to achieve each year are good to have, a degree of leeway should be given in the interest of quality versus quantity.

4.9.4 The partnership with IMS

Torben Brandt and Rasmus Steen who manage the program received great praise and one participant in particular pointed to “their enthusiasm, personal touch, frequent contact and willingness to create opportunities for feedback.” They were also appreciated because they “listened” and took into consideration other points of view.

4.9.5 On strategy, immediate objectives and results

The twinning programme appears to be a valuable and successful strategy chosen by IMS to achieve the aim of obtaining maximum professional exchange between Arab and Danish partners. What makes it most effective is that, with the right ingredients (high professionalism and personal chemistry as the cement of the working relationship), it creates a unique drive and enthusiasm. As one participant explained, “it is creating a space for interaction between 2 people from different cultures and contexts without any pre-conceived agendas.”

There were no issues raised concerning objectives or results as stated in the project document. Though most participants did not recall what the twinning programme’s stated objectives were, the participants views on what the project should achieve were in harmony with the programme’s initial stated objectives and results.

While the results are overall in line with the ambitions of the project, IMS may consider revising them because of the difficulty of measuring such results.

4.9.6 Recommendations for the future

IMS can better capitalise on the programme

The project should continue. It should however be placed under the sole umbrella of IMS (rather than making a shared programme with the Danish Centre for Culture and Development) because IMS has expertise in the region, a more permanent programme in the Arab region and the twinning project has the potential of benefiting other components of the IMS programme.

IMS could be more proactive in exploring how the twinning project can benefit its other existing projects. The coordinators could also facilitate connecting the twinning partners to individuals or organisations that IMS is working with in other components to identify distribution channels for the outputs of the twinings.

Flexibility and high level of professionalism is non-negotiable

The programme should retain its flexibility and the number of twinings expected in a project cycle should be adjusted based on the experiences of the last 2 years. A high degree of professionalism and mutual commitment and interest (they are not “nice to have projects but must have projects”) in a project are key criteria for all participants. When appropriate, use intermediaries who have specialised knowledge and contacts to assist in matching up individuals for projects.

IMS could make use of the “graduates” of the programme to help prepare and induct future participants. For example, if other Syrians will benefit from twinings, let the current Syrian beneficiaries share their experience with future participants.

4.9.7 Issues for IMS and its partners to consider

- How can this project be made to better use within existing components of the IMS programme?
- How can the project widen the net of professionals who know and can potentially have access to this facility?
- Are all media welcome to participate in this project regardless of their ownership and political affiliations?
- What systems need to be put in place in order to qualitatively and systematically measure the outcome and impact of this project?

5 Overall analysis and findings

5.1 Findings on overall achievements of the programme

IMS and its partners are overall “on track” if one compares achievements to date with the objectives and results that are set out in the programme document. This is clearly documented in the section on “objectives and results” in the programme component sub-sections of this report. Given the complexities of working in the Arab region in general, the volatile political situation, and mixing in the difficulties in initiating new, pioneering projects, IMS and its partners should be applauded for what they have achieved together in just one year.

Some highlights from the initiatives include:

- The establishment of a regional working group of human rights organisations who are engaged in monitoring media’s coverage of elections. In 2006, the group supported monitoring exercises in 5 countries. Most monitoring reports received widespread local and international attention. This initiative serves as a major contribution towards civil society organisations holding the media accountable to professional standards. These initiatives also convinced several participating organisations to incorporate media freedom and freedom of expression issues into their organisation’s overall priorities.
- The establishment of the first Arab network for investigative journalism, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism. In 2006, the network has supported 31 journalists from the region to conduct in-depth investigations for their media outlets.
- The local production and dissemination of quality children and youth programming with national broadcasters in Jordan and Syria in collaboration with the Danish public broadcaster.
- The establishment of an independent, regional Arab Institute for Film. In 2006, training and production support was provided to emerging documentary filmmakers, which resulted in the production of 8 quality documentaries.

When seeking to support any kind of change -- such as broadening the media landscape or enhancing professional skills -- process plays a primordial role in achieving (quality) outputs. IMS can be commended for several achievements linked to process:

IMS has chosen to invest staff and financial resources in **relationship building** which has already shown important dividends. For example, none of the partnerships were severed as a result of the political crisis that ensued following the publication of cartoons in Denmark depicting the Prophet Mohammed. While investments in relationship building do not always show tangible outputs directly related to the project at hand, I do not believe that IMS could have supported and helped manage the development of pioneering initiatives as it has in this programme without having first forged mutual respect and trust with its partners and garnered strong commitment and enthusiasm on both sides. This is a crucial factor in ensuring the further sustainability and quality of this programme. This investment and attention to relationship building should continue and be improved on.

IMS has chosen to take **risks** with the aim of investing in projects that will have a long life span and tangible long-term impacts on media in the region rather than investing in projects that provide quick, short-term gains and leave little behind. Most of the components in this programme involve pioneering projects that are enabling local media actors to expand the limits of media openness and professionalism in their own societies. Under this programme, two new organisations, the AIF and ARIJ, and several initiatives that encourage critical dialogue between media professionals themselves and with other members of civil society (such as human rights organisations) have been launched. This risk taking has helped IMS gain respect from local organisations in the Arab region and heightens the relevance and impact of IMS's work in the region.

IMS has balanced pioneering (when it is necessary) with **collaboration and cooperation** with others so as to avoid duplication. Because IMS is governed by representatives of leading international media and freedom of expression organisations, it is able to stay informed about other like-minded initiatives and defers to others when there are clear advantages in doing so.

5.2 Findings on challenges

This programme faces several core challenges:

- There are two initiatives that have not progressed during the first year of implementation of this programme, namely the legal protection initiative implemented by Free Voice and CDFJ under Component 1 and Component 2 (strengthening journalists' unions and associations) which is being implemented by the IFJ and the DUJ. IMS is concerned about the lack of developments of these two projects and has made good faith efforts to understand the causes for the delays and to support partners to address bottlenecks when they could.
- The "Partnership for Co-production and Exchange between Public Broadcasters" project remains fragile. While it was judicious that IMS changed course after the first phase of implementation based on the results of an evaluation, the project's success in its current form depends entirely on buy-in and commitment from management of the national broadcasters in the Arab region and in Denmark. The agendas of national broadcasters in the Arab region are, at the end of the day, governed by political considerations that neither the stations' middle management nor IMS have any control over. The ultimate outcomes of this project based on the desired results have little to do with the professionalism, enthusiasm and good will of its participants. The biggest risk is that many of the individuals trained under this programme become desirable commodities for private TV channels and decide to leave the state broadcaster for more open and more lucrative pastures. IMS is well aware of the risk involved and is forging on with this project with caution and realism.
- IMS is currently coordinating three projects: the media monitoring project under Component 1, Component 4 and Component 6. This role places large responsibilities on IMS and pressures on IMS staff. In the TV production project, it also places IMS in the "driver's seat" which is ultimately undesirable in terms of fostering ownership and sustainability of the projects. These issues do not apply to the twinning programme which is different in nature. With regards to the media monitoring project, IMS and its partners agree that ultimately the project needs to be entirely administered and managed by members of the working group. The

struggle will be to put in place the basis for a good handover. At the moment, the continuation of the TV production exchange project is entirely dependent on IMS's continued involvement and there is no evidence of any alternative structure for conceptualizing, managing and implementing the project for the time being.

5.3 Findings on partnership-building

Background

The graph in Annex 3 depicts the various roles that IMS plays in each component. IMS provides little to no information in its documentation of what it means by “partnerships.”

From conversations with staff, IMS considers itself not just a donor but an organisation of committed media professionals who seek to engage in lasting joint ventures with like-minded individuals in the Arab region. IMS seeks to create relationships that exceed contractual agreements and where motivations for engagement exceed the classic “donor-recipient” relationship. There is certainly no blue print for achieving such relationships and IMS does not believe in blue prints. This said, IMS appears to have made some headway in what it seeks to achieve.

This said, tensions in partnerships arose especially in the components wherein IMS played multiple roles, where mutual interdependency was high and where new ventures were being created. While it remains to be seen whether playing these multiple roles is desirable and efficient for all parties involved, IMS needs to improve its effectiveness in managing its relationships.

Fortunately these roles that IMS took on and the tensions that arose as a result do not seem to have affected the outputs or the quality of the work of the organisations. They did however take up time and resources that could have been better spent elsewhere.

A trusted sounding board and ally. In general, IMS staff is appreciated by the partners for the feedback and insights they provide on content-related issues and project development. Overall, there is a healthy degree of trust, openness and mutual respect which is an important foundation in any working relationship. In most cases, partners say that IMS does not impose its agenda, unlike some other donors. In one case, IMS is seen as an important credible international ally that provides some level of protection from potential backlashes from authoritarian governments in the region. IMS has also successfully served as facilitator and mediator between various players in a project, such as in the television production and exchange project and the journalists' union capacity building project.

Multiple roles and high interdependency increase complexity. As the number of roles IMS takes on within each component rises, so does the level of complexity and the potential for conflict. This was especially true for the components that involved setting up organisations from scratch.

In the case of ARIJ, IMS agreed to temporarily help with its administration since it did not have systems yet in place. In the case of the Institute of Film, both parties agreed to appoint an IMS staff person as interim executive director until a suitable local Director could be found. IMS also took on the logistics and financial administration of AIF since its systems were not yet in place.

This situation enlarged the “degree of power” IMS had in both relationships and in each case, IMS partners felt that their independence and control was being tampered with to varying degrees. Conversely, IMS felt it took the blame for everything that did not go according to plan. The tensions were due not so much because IMS took on these roles (since all parties agreed that it was the most viable and appropriate choice at the time) but more due to how all parties dealt with these roles and the “new” relationship. Though both parties state that clear agreements were made, in reality lines of accountability remained murky, and end decision-making power remained unclear.

In cases where IMS played multiple roles but also has main responsibility for coordinating and managing logistics of projects, these tensions did not arise. This is true for the media monitoring and television production and exchange projects in particular. While IMS has agreed to take on this role in the interest of initiatives moving forward, ultimately, IMS would like the organisations in the region to take on full responsibility for the projects.

5.4 Issues for IMS and its partners to consider

- Under what conditions should IMS serve as the executor of a project or organisation?
- What effect do the above choices have on roles and responsibilities and checks and balances between IMS and its partners?
- What can IMS and its partners do to improve the quality of their partnerships? What should IMS do more of, less of, or stop doing?
- How could IMS make better use of its partners in relationship to its own programme development?

5.5 Findings related to intervention strategies

Working on a regional level

Each component of IMS works on a regional basis, i.e. in more than one country. Activities IMS has supported have benefited individuals or organisations in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

All the projects IMS is supporting either are governed by regional boards or have an ambition to work on a regional basis. There are clear advantages for this choice to IMS. First, its support has the potential for broad impact. This choice of strategy is also in line with the programme’s aim of stimulating dialogue, exchange and cooperation across borders. The regional nature also serves as a protective measure for organisations because it makes them harder to clamp down on. For journalists working in very repressive environments, it gives them alternative outlets to work with and for. In general, this choice of working regionally is supported by most partners who see the value in deepening relationships, understanding, and tolerance in the region and with professionals from other parts of the world in the face of deepening insecurity and political conflicts.

This choice, however relevant, comes with challenges and risks: as an ARIJ board member stated, “it’s the hard road but the right road.” Differences in culture and political openness are played out in regional governance structures which can often

complicate the work of an organisation. ARIJ faces funding restrictions and other complications due to the restrictions the Syrian government poses on the board member from that country for example.

The challenges in working regionally are finding individuals who can rise above the politics and finding ways of working around the politics in order to achieve common goals. The other challenge lies in individuals showing personal leadership by inspiring and instilling working principles and values that encourage transparency, selflessness and solidarity. Partners valued the neutrality that Danish and/or European board members brought to the Arab governance structures.

Danish or European involvement

In all cases, partners said they valued the expertise that Danish or European institutions offered and welcome their continued involvement. This comes from the fact that individuals involved are of high professional calibre, motivated, respectful and value the opportunity to build relationships with their peers in the Arab region, especially during these politically tumultuous times between the Arab region and the West. “As long as they don’t have a civilizing mission,” says one board member.

IMS was also careful to involve Danish counterparts where Danish expertise offers a comparative advantage to other European players. This is especially true with regards to children and youth television programme production and Danish documentary film. The choice of a Danish counterpart in the investigative journalism project comes from the organisation’s previous experience in working with fostering investigative journalism in Eastern Europe. While the IFJ is pleased with the involvement of the DUJ in the union capacity building project, others, arguably, could have played an equally substantial role.

The challenge is to ensure that the involvement of Danish counterparts continues as long as they add value and are not artificially imposed in the long-term. Their involvement makes sense now. Through time, their utility may shift or wane.

Institution-building

While most funding organisations shy away from supporting start-ups, IMS has decided to be a “risk taker” by supporting the development of new organisations. As one person interviewed so beautifully put it, “it is the difference between planting tomato plants and olive trees. With an olive tree, you will be fed for a 100 years.”

In a region experiencing political and social change, there is a need for new independent initiatives that break new ground and create new space for expression and professionalism. The new initiatives IMS has chosen to support, such as ARIJ, AIF and the media monitoring initiative, are investments in the long-term which is what many professionals in the region are itching for rather than most initiatives that leave few tangible traces behind.

The challenge for IMS is in how to best support institution-building and for its partners how best to develop an organisation. The tendency so far has been for IMS to temporarily fill-in the administrative gaps when needed out of a mutual urgency to get activities going.

Twinnings

Though the sample of twinnings analysed is small, this project has obviously generated great enthusiasm and momentum between the Arab and Danish counterparts. Its

success is in its flexibility to support tailor-made exchanges and collaborations between professionals. It is a very powerful strategy in building bridges across cultures, fostering mutual understanding and in producing more quality and nuanced reporting. As one participant explained, “it is creating a space for interaction between two people from different cultures and contexts without any pre-conceived agendas.” And this works!

The challenge here is that it is labour intensive: the exchanges are based on relationship building and making successful matches between individuals which takes time. While the expectation is that the outputs from most of the exchanges will be quality productions both in the Arab region and in Denmark, its core value lies largely in intangibles which have to do with change in behaviour and attitude which are not “sexy” to most back-donors and perhaps a hard project to sell.

TV production and exchange

This strategy was chosen as a way to engage with reform minded state-owned broadcasters in the region and to instil public service practices through co-productions and learning exchanges with a special focus on children and youth programming.

The choice of focusing on children and youth was appropriate both because of Danish expertise in this area and the interest and demand for this at the chosen television stations. What’s more, the young talent that is being trained today may go on to hold other positions within the TV stations and thus have an impact beyond the current reach of this project.

While the initial intervention model did not succeed, the current one has created more opportunities, though they remain tenuous: DR’s involvement comes with pre-requisites that the project may not be able to fulfil in the long run and the commitments required from both Arab stations to sustain the success of this project have yet to materialise. Furthermore, the journalists currently being trained are likely to leave the state broadcasters for jobs with satellite stations. While in this case the overall investment would not be lost, the expected effect within the public broadcaster may be.

5.5.1 Issues for IMS and its partners to consider

- What requires extra attention and resources in making a regional initiative successful?
- How flexible is IMS’ pre-requisite of involving Danish expertise?
- What special investments need to be made by IMS and its partners in order to support effective organisational development?
- How can IMS more effectively measure and demonstrate the outcomes and impacts of projects with less tangible outputs such as the twinning programme?

5.6 Overall findings related to immediate objectives and results

Adjusting objectives and results

In general the immediate objectives and results as stated in the project document are shared by partners and in most cases the projects are “on track,” i.e. the immediate objectives are on their way to being met. Objectives for several components need to be revised as mentioned in the separate component sections above.

Since the strategy and course of action has changed for Component 4, project objectives and results need to be revised accordingly.

Ensuring quality

Once objectives and results are clarified, the hard work comes of planning, monitoring and evaluating ones work. In general, self-monitoring and self-evaluation systems among most partner organisations and IMS need further development and attention. It is in IMS' interest to foster learning and evaluation not only with its own staff but also with its partners. After all, if IMS' partners are not able to monitor and evaluate its own work in order to improve on it, IMS' support will be in vain.

5.6.1 Issues for IMS and its partners to consider

- How can IMS and its partners improve in developing clear goals, objectives and results for its projects, programmes or organisations?
- How can IMS and its partners improve in their planning, monitoring and evaluation systems? What areas does it need most support in?
- How can the end-evaluation exercise of this 2-year programme be used to engage all partners in evaluating their own work?

5.7 Findings on budgeting and cost effectiveness

With regards to spending

It seems that IMS and its partners are able to spend their budgets. On average spending across all the components seems to be on target. In most cases about half of the total budgets have been spent as IMS and its partners approach the half way mark of the programme timeline. The only trouble spots concern the Free Voice MENA project which has only spent 4% of its funds under Component 1 and Component 2 which has spent no funds. Spending under Component 3 and 6 seem to be lightly lagging behind but this may be due to the timelines for implementation.

One of IMS's main challenges has been to get their partners to manage their budgets (to stay within budget caps), to estimate costs properly and to collect competitive bids ahead of procuring services, equipment, etc. In many instances this is due to the fact that partners do not have financial management talents. They were selected for their professional expertise in the media field. This only highlights the importance and value of allocating sufficient resources to adequate financial management support staff within each project to ensure greater financial accountability.

The financial controller of this programme has spent much time and energy to support partner organisations to understand spending and reporting requirements. This investment has paid off. Partners in general have been able to report appropriately and in a timely fashion.

With regards to budgeting

Based on planned outputs and achievements to date, the overall budgets for Components 2 and 4 seems high given the planned scope and outputs of the initiatives.

In general, these projects are expensive because of the regional nature of the initiatives and organisations supported. This means that budgets need to be made available for

board members from various countries to meet regularly and for beneficiaries to travel to a central point to attend trainings and other activities.

Also, due to the nature of the projects and IMS's role in some of them, not only do staff need to travel very regularly to the region in order to build understanding and relationships with project initiators but local facilities are necessary to enable projects to be implemented. The IMS "house/office" in Amman, Jordan inevitably helps IMS and projects save on a variety of costs given the fact that it is used as an office, for housing staff when they are in the region and as a training facility for Component 4.

In the first phase of the project, budgeting was somewhat driven by IMS which had to estimate expenditures with little "actual" budgeting and expenditure information to go on. Some of the approved budgets did not always meet the actual needs of partners as they evolved which created frustrations between IMS and its partners. Some partners raised frustrations regarding budgeting and spending rules and restrictions imposed by the MFA.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations on overall programme management issues

6.1.1 Consolidate!

Given the very short (two-year) life span of each programme phase, IMS should not be too eager to adopt or support additional projects or initiatives. Current successful initiatives need time to mature and weaker initiatives need to be given their test period. I believe that only after a four-year period will IMS and its partners be able to get a good sense of “what is working and not working,” gain insights into why, and begin to capture outcomes and initial impacts of the separate activities.

6.1.2 Staffing

Given the importance of relationship building to the nature of IMS’s work, given the various roles IMS has played and that several of its partners would like it to continue playing, and given the pioneering nature of many of the projects in this programme, IMS needs to be able to at least maintain if not increase its staffing levels. I recommend that IMS have at least one programme officer that is able to speak and read Arabic and that is available to spend extended periods of time in the region. The current arrangement of having programme officers “oversee” specific projects seems to work. I recommend. As IMS seems to have done in the past, that as new staff members come on board and responsibilities are determined that attention is paid to creating the best match possible between the competencies of the individual programme officers and the competencies that each project or component most requires. It is also important that space and time is created in the programme director’s job description for managing staff members and on-going strategy development work.

6.1.3 Developing a programme plan

IMS would benefit from developing a calendar of benchmarks for each programme phase that may enable it to meet some of its information gathering and information sharing needs more smoothly. Important benchmarks might include deadlines for when specific information is required for self-evaluation or reporting to donors which may relate to when certain partner visits need to take place in order to get a sense of how initiatives are progressing. Another benchmark may be around what meetings are required internally to reflect on progress, address policy issues or inform higher management on progress. Evaluation exercises and planning for new programme phases are other important benchmarks that require attention sometimes months ahead of the actual implementation.

6.1.4 Sharpen the programme logic

Under each component section earlier in this report, I provided feedback on whether revisions need to be made to the “immediate objectives and results” as they are currently stated in the programme document.

In general, the following issues should be considered when preparing the wording of objectives and results in the next programme document:

- Many immediate objectives contain several ideas. To make them more manageable and understandable, each objective should contain just one idea.

- In order to reduce the overall complexity of this programme, reduce the number of objectives by prioritising them.
- Objectives are often expressed in such general terms that they do not say much about what the project is really seeking to achieve. For example, it is evident that partnerships are going to be achieved in many of these projects, but what does that partnership look like?
- Consistency. There were no results in the project document for Components 3 and 4.
- Objectives and results are expressed at different levels. Some relate to service delivery (working environment for journalists improved) and others in relation to target group (Arab media community understand importance of impartial media coverage). IMS and its partners need to be consistent and clear on the target groups for each activity and word the objectives and results in relationship to these target groups.

Ultimately partners should be responsible for developing clear objectives and result areas for their initiatives. While IMS does not want to unduly burden their partners with having to develop detailed logical frameworks (let them invest their energies on doing the work they want, need and are good at doing!), I recommend that IMS support their partners to be able to articulate a minimal multi-year strategic framework for their organisations and/or activities: mission, overall goals, objectives and result areas and some basic indication of how they intend to evaluate their work. This may require hiring external support. (See Annex 5 for a sample outcomes framework to determine results, outcomes and evaluation needs.)

I also recommend that in addition to the logic in the separate components, IMS review its entire programme logic (programme goals/aims, the relationship between components and the four strategic levels, etc.) as a periodic check as the programme evolves. IMS should take care that it remains consistent in describing its programme. In progress reports for example, the overall programme objectives are expressed differently than in the original programme document for example. If changes are made mid-stream in programme, IMS should explain why.

6.1.5 Keep your finger on the pulse

It is a struggle for any international organisation to keep abreast of developments in countries where it has no base of operations. Periodic environmental scans are essential. While IMS staff members are skilled professionals that come to their jobs with knowledge of the Arab region, I recommend that staff structure time into their partner visits to meet with organisations and individuals that are not directly involved in their projects in order to keep abreast of developments and get outsider views on the projects they are supporting. This is especially important for the twinning programme which works with a large array of media houses and journalists that IMS has no prior relationship to or knowledge of.

I also believe IMS could consider making better use of some of the individuals involved in the projects they already support and other key actors to get ideas, critical feedback and recommendations on its overall programme choices and directions. A small group of individuals could be brought together once every two years to serve as a sounding board or advisory group to IMS.

6.1.6 Managing weaker projects

As stated earlier in this report, there are three projects that have shown little to no progress in the last year or face particular challenges. The project involving state broadcasters is tenuous. I recommend that, for these cases, IMS decide on what basis it would agree to continue supporting the projects after 2008. This should be discussed with its partners so that there is mutual understanding around IMS concerns, its expectations in the short-term, and its level of long-term commitment.

6.1.7 Managing IMS's "management and implementation" role

In the media monitoring project, IMS plays a primary coordinating function. I recommend, as is already being discussed, that IMS and the working group work together towards achieving an effective handover of IMS' coordination responsibilities to the working group. This however should not be rushed since if the handover is done too early, it may harm the ability of the working group to keep functioning effectively.

In the case of the TV production exchange project, there is no current viable alternative to IMS continuing to lead the project. In order for IMS's role to change, IMS should consider strategies for ensuring a stronger commitment at high management levels within the TV stations for the project by involving them more directly in project activities.

6.2 Recommendations on intervention strategies

6.2.1 Regional scope of the initiatives

As was stated earlier in this report, most partners agree that working regionally is "the right road but the hard road." The regional scope should be maintained and IMS and its back donor should understand that this "set up" may inherently slow down and complicate implementation of projects.

I also recommend that projects, where relevant, pay special attention to how they can deepen commitment and involvement in their initiatives at national level.

6.2.2 Institution building

Since IMS has entered into a joint venture of building new organisations, it has made an implicit commitment to supporting not only the quality of the content of the activities but also the quality of the management of the organisation. It is essential that attention and resources be made available to these new organisations to help them become effective functioning entities.

I recommend that IMS staff engage regularly with its partners (where appropriate) about organisational development issues so that these can be addressed appropriately and when needed. It is an area of support that is often overlooked. It goes without saying that support should always be commensurate to the stage of development the organisation is in. Organisational development support might include things such as:

- Expert support to help support strategic planning which includes developing a vision, mission, and organisational strategy.
- Training for the board, organisational management skills, financial management, project or programme development and management, etc.
- Network building

IMS should be careful not take it upon itself to help fill all their partners' needs. It may not have the competencies required and this may not fit with the role IMS seeks to play.

6.2.3 Involvement of Danish and/or other European expertise

The partnerships forged between Arab and Danish/European professionals in these projects were appreciated and added value to these projects. What IMS has managed to do is identify on both sides highly professional and committed individuals and institutions that are able to work together well because of their shared interest and aims. These partnerships should continue as long as they add value. IMS should structure regular feedback from all sides to understand the continued value of the relationships and be careful never to impose if the partnerships have outlived their purpose.

6.2.4 Partnership building

As stated in the findings section of this report, all partners gave high marks to IMS for the role it had played in the various initiatives and how it had managed to a large extent to fulfil its intention of entering into partnerships with a view to forging long-term and lasting professional exchanges. While IMS strives to create relationships that supersede the nuts and bolts of technical and contractual engagements, it and its partners must continue to be more vigilant and consistent in articulating the rules of engagement.

In way to do this it to consistently remind oneself that the depth and breadth of a relationship is very much influenced by several factors listed below. These should be taken into account in order for IMS to better manage its ambitions with each partner and vice versa:

- The degree of funding involved
- The difference in maturity and capacity of organisations involved in the partnership
- The degree of trust and understanding between the organisations which is linked in part to the phase in which the relationship is in.
- The compatibility and mutuality of purpose between partners: are the values, policies, constituency similar or in line?

IMS and its partners should also pay special attention to the following issues in order to continuously improve on the health of their relationships:

- Invest more time and effort in negotiating the terms of partnerships and as much as possible this should be done face-to- face. Some of the partnerships within this programme were less effective because there was/is a hidden or open mismatch between what each party considers their rights when compared with obligations the other organisation feels towards them. These issues need to be put out in the open and negotiated.
- Consider with great care the advantages and disadvantages and ethical implications of taking on certain roles and responsibilities in a partnership. In the case of an IMS staff person assuming an executive position within a partner organisation for example, this staff person should be clearly seconded or contracted to the partner organisation and not be put in a situation of double accountability by also remaining employed by IMS.
- Details around roles and responsibilities have to be carefully discussed (face-to-face) and agreements drafted and signed. Who has the right to make final

decisions, on what issues? What budgets are available and expenditures acceptable? What are acceptable procedures for equipment purchases, etc?

- Rights and obligations of each party need to be discussed and agreed to in detail and consequences for breach of agreements in both sides clearly discussed. A rights and obligations approach to negotiation is potentially useful because it makes essential relational issues transparent. First, it illuminates differences in assumptions, needs and sensitivities so that they can be discussed instead of avoided. Second, the approach makes clear the degree of mutuality, give and take and (in)balance achieved.”¹¹
- Regular feedback mechanisms between partners need to be structured into yearly visits so that periodic “check ups” around the relationship take place.
- Space should be built into staff meetings to allow for periodic discussion among IMS staff around the issue of partnerships and the impact of choices that are being made along the way.

6.3 Recommendations on promoting greater sustainability

If an organisation holds itself accountable to itself and its beneficiaries first, then it will more likely be accountable to others like its donors. IMS can play an important role in helping its partners become more accountable and thus sustainable: structure reflection more consistently in their work, capture the outputs and outcomes of their activities, present programmes with clearly articulated objectives and strategies etc. IMS should make budgetary allocations available for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation activities both for IMS and its partners.

It is in IMS’ interest to foster learning and evaluation not only with its own staff but within its partners because it will contribute to their ability to be organisationally sustainable thus more financially sustainable. This is especially important given the fact that IMS is supporting many new initiatives and is the sole funder in some cases.

In order for these new initiatives to be able to attract additional funding, they will need to be able to demonstrate their track records as well as present programmes with clearly articulated objectives and strategies. I recommend that budgetary allocations be made available for planning, monitoring and evaluation activities both for IMS and its partners. In Annex 4 I identify areas for each project that should be measured to understand the quality of the work being achieved.

Some attention should be placed on deciding what evaluation mechanisms need to be put in place to capture outcomes and impacts of the work. In Annex 5, I outline a simple outcomes framework that may be useful for IMS and its partners to consider in the next programme framework.

6.4 Recommendations on budgeting and cost effectiveness

- There are several factors that give confidence that funds are being spent appropriately and effectively: 1) an organisation’s capacity to budget realistically; 2) an organisation’s capacity to manage its expenditures; 3) evidence of sound financial control and checks and balances mechanisms; and 4) measuring spending

¹¹ See *Partnerships: Negotiating Relationships* by Alan Fowler for INTRAC, March 2000.

in relationship to quantity and quality of outputs. These are the areas IMS needs to be attentive to with regards to itself and its partners.

- In the next phase of the programme, budgeting needs even more to be driven by partners based on experience they gathered in the last year. This will create more ownership around budgets drawn up for each of the components and will enable budgets to be more “realistic” in terms of budget line allocations.
- Resources should be made available to ensure that partner organisations have the capacity in-house to manage their finances effectively.

6.5 Recommendations on a future evaluation of the programme

Future evaluations of this programme should take its cue from what was learned through this process.

- Start planning and organising for a review or evaluation well in advance of the deadline.
- Involve those who will make use of the review or evaluation from the start of the process in order to increase the overall utility of such a costly and important exercise.
- I recommend that the following evaluation process should capture in a more structured and in-depth way the outcomes of the initiatives. This would entail conducting interviews or focus group discussions with the target groups of the various initiatives. The evaluation should also include measuring the quality of the work being done and understanding IMS’s programme in the broader context of media activities and media support available in the Arab region. Since most of the initiatives IMS is supporting do not have their own evaluation processes in place, this evaluation exercise could be used to help the partners in the region to consider what they want to evaluate and how to best to do it. Given the short (two year) time span of each programme period, I do not recommend conducting large external evaluations at the end of each programme phase. An external evaluation will probably be most useful at the end of a 4 year period of implementation.

6.6 Recommendations on how to incorporate learning in your practice

Schedule periodic programme staff meetings and a yearly programme retreat.

IMS programme staff should plan to meet regularly to share information, discuss successes, and raise issues of concern or share dilemmas about their practice. Since new staff will be joining the programme, time will probably need to be dedicated to creating common understanding among staff around the programme. The programme director should try to consciously incorporate learning into these meetings rather than just information sharing by using some simple learning tools such as an After Action Review and the framework used by the TearFund for pre-, during and post-learning process. (The consultant can make this available to IMS if interested.)

Inculcate action learning as a tool in IMS’s practice. IMS should consciously incorporate the action learning loop into its practice and work principles. This means consciously giving attention to all four segments of action learning. i.e. planning > action > reflection > learning. How much time and resources you spend on this cycle will vary from project to project. (See Annex 6 for details on the action learning cycle.)

Peer consultations. For the purposes of team building and peer learning, I recommend that IMS consider inter-collegial dialogue to take place 2 or 4 times a year among programme staff. The financial controller should not be forgotten here! The consultations can serve purposes such as brain picking, how to improve practice, problem solving, sharing successes etc. The point is stimulating and encouraging colleagues to learn from each other. Those enthusiastic about being part of these consultations should probably be trained once in peer consultation methodologies. I suggest IMS consult a book entitled *Learning with Colleagues: An Action Guide for Peer Consultations* by Eric de Haan to learn more about peer consultations.

Annex 1 - TOR

TOR for

Mid-Term Review of IMS Media Cooperation Programme with Arab World and Iran

A. Subject of the evaluation:

IMS is currently implementing a 2-year programme titled “Media Cooperation with the Arab world and Iran”. The programme has received funding by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and some additional other sources (Ford Foundation and OSI) and runs from September 2005 - August 2007. The programme was preceded by a 1-year inception phase which was the object of an internal evaluation made in May 2005.

The regional media programme is expected to be extended with another 2-year period – a draft programme document will be developed by IMS and its partners in early spring 2007 with planned commencement in September 2007.

The regional media programme includes the following six components:

- Monitoring, Advocacy and Legal Protection
- Capacity Building of Journalists’ Unions & Associations
- Arab Reporters Investigative Journalism – Investigative Journalism and establishment of Arabic network
- Audio-Visual Co-production and Exchange
- Production of Documentaries and establishment of Arab Institute for Film
- Twinning – Danish Arab Media Forum

The overall objective of the programme is to support the development of independent media in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) and Iran through partnerships with MENA & Iranian media, and thereby contribute to the establishment of a broader platform for pluralistic dialogue in the MENA region.

The guiding principle for the programme has been to base activities on an in-depth understanding and respect for the context, to set long-term strategic goals, create and consolidate regional and international cooperation and to ensure that activities are demand-driven and partnership-led.

B. Background for the review:

A mid-term review is foreseen and described in the overall programme document. The review will enable IMS and its partners to take informed decisions about programme objectives and implementation strategies for the remaining programme period and about relevant adjustments and revised priorities for a second phase of the media programme.

The review will be designed and used as an integral part of IMS’s continuous evaluation and reporting process thus being a complementary element to the regular 6-month reporting and the planned full evaluation – both in terms of substance and process of formation. These 3 levels of reporting should in their entirety shed light on the development, dynamics, results and relevance of the objectives of the overall programme and its different components. But this aim should be reached through processes that are integrated into each component’s own evolution and thus form natural part of the partnership driven concept development – the very essence of the programme. It is especially important, that the review – though respecting traditional

review requirements – is perceived as a meaningful exercise for its main users - IMS and its partners in the Arab region and in Denmark.

C. Overall objectives:

IMS and its partners are better equipped to

- Pursue a continuous and dynamic development of the media programme in relationship to its overall goals
- Refine and adjust immediate project objectives
- Improve implementation strategies and performance

D. Immediate objectives:

- A flexible and participatory review process based on the special preconditions and development potential of each programme component is designed/implemented and perceived as a meaningful learning exercise for all involved.
- Immediate objectives and strategies are examined around the following key questions:

I. Are the immediate objectives (as stated for each component in the programme document (May 2005) shared by all partners?

II. Are desired results for the programme shared by all partners?

III. What has been the added value of the partnership and institution-building strategies (see p.4) of the programme?

IV. How have other aspects (than partnership- and institution building) of the intervention strategies of each component enabled IMS and its partners to meet the programme components' immediate objectives?

E. Scope:

The review shall – based on its findings regarding project implementation to date - be forward looking and come up with clear recommendations for a second phase of the programme. The review shall identify and make suggestions for general themes and concrete issues to be examined further during the planned full external evaluation, which will take place after the first year of the second phase of the programme (2008).

The review should not examine the relevance of the identified 6 components and overall long-term objectives of the programme/components.

Focus should be on the overall direction of each component – to what extent the immediate objectives already have been or are likely to be achieved. The review should focus on the “how’s” in order to assess the strategy applied to implement the programme overall and within each component – both in technical terms (management, admin, process etc) as well as in terms of reaching the overall substantive goal of promoting a platform for improved dialogue between professional media people. Also, without going into details of specific outputs and activities carried out the review should look at to which extent the quantity and quality of the outputs in general justify the efforts/means/funds used for achieving them.

Each component has its own characteristics and has undergone its own evolution and should therefore be examined on its own premises and merits. In addition to the above the following specific themes should be addressed for each component:

Component 1:

Media monitoring:

- What are the similarities and differences in how media monitoring has been carried out in the various countries?
- What have been the outcomes of the monitoring exercises on the target groups and on the partner organisations?
- How is the methodology appreciated by the various partners?
- What is the partners' vision for the future of the project and the Arab Working Group?

“Eye on the Arab Media”:

- What have been the major challenges and potentialities of the project?
- What is the vision for the programme's future development?
- How can cooperation with IMS add further value to the ongoing development of the programme?

Legal protection:

- Are there structural and conceptual differences in the IMS and the Free Voice/CDFJ approaches?
- And if so what are the consequences for further project implementation?

Component 2 – Capacity Building of Journalists Unions and Associations:

- What are the major challenges and potentialities of this project?
- What are the views of the involved partners on how adequate implementation of the project can best be ensured?
- What is the vision of the partners around the future of the programme and their respective role in it?

Component 3 – Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism:

- What are the major challenges and potentialities of this project?
- What elements of the ARIJ operation should be strengthened further in order to enable it to achieve its mission and objectives?
- What is ARIJ's vision for what it needs to achieve in its next phase of development?

Component 4: Co-production and Exchange between public broadcasters

- What have been the major achievements and obstacles in the second phase of implementation?
- To what extent have issues raised by the January 2006 evaluation been addressed?
- What is the vision for the future of the programme?
- What is the willingness of current partners to stay involved and invest sufficient resources in the programme for another 2 years?

Component 5 – Arab-Danish Cooperation on Documentary Film:

- What have been the major achievements and challenges of the project to date?

- How have legal, administrative and institutional dilemmas been handled and solved?
- What is the vision for the AIF in the next 2 years?
- What does AIF need to fulfil that vision?
- How can AIF benefit from cooperation with IMS in trying to reach this vision?

Component 6 – Twinning Danish-Arab Media Forum:

Two twinings will be examined to enable the Danish Arab Media Forum to provide input for the preparations for a larger evaluation exercise planned for January 2006.

- What impact has the twinning had on the content of the products of the participating journalists and on their working methods?
- What is the essence of the twinning methodology and how was that perceived by partners?
- What is the vision for future collaboration and what should a future twinning component look like?

The establishment of partnerships has been guided by two main principles. Firstly, that cooperation should have a regional perspective, i.e. transcend national borders in the Arab world (including Iran). Secondly, activities within each area should entail and encourage professional collaboration and dialogue between partners based there and in Denmark/Europe. This mode of partnership has formed the backbone of all work done to date. It has led to close cooperation between Arab and Danish partners and to a joint development of institutions with shared ownership.

In carrying out the review the following cross-cutting themes should be kept in mind:

How has the partnership approach been dealt with in practice – and where it is taking us in relation to the overall objectives of the programme: expanding the platform for dialogue among professionals within the region and between regions ‘globally’?

How has the composition of partnerships and the managerial set up affected the way things have gone so far?

- How can the partnership concept be sustained and further developed?

The process of developing new institutions in the Arab region has proven to be an intricate exercise in terms of matching different expectations, legal platforms, traditions for decision-making and running of businesses. For those of the components where institution building has been at the centre of the strategy (i.e. components 3 and 5), the review should pay particular attention to the following themes:

- Whether the new institutions have provided for new professional opportunities that could not as well have been achieved in the existing professional media environments.
- Whether the mere exercise of jointly setting up a new platform for professional collaboration strengthened the notion of partnership between Arab and Danish/European media professionals.
- How the sustainability of these institutions and the viability of the partnerships upon which they rest can best be ensured.
- Organisational set-up, roles/responsibilities, decision making processes.

Learning

How could the programme ensure to generate and document lessons learnt in a systemized manner that allows for it to benefit from future activities in a constructive manner?

F. Methodology:

The review will be participatory and IMS and the Danish and Arab partners should play an active role throughout the process.

The review team will base its findings on key available documentation such as the Evaluation Report of the Inception Phase of “Media Cooperation with the Wider Middle East” (May 2005), Programme Document on “Media Cooperation with the Arab World and Iran” (May 2005), the 6 Project Component Documents (May 2005 and November 2005), the 2 6-month status reports (March and October 2006) as well as all relevant selected project specific correspondence and documentation which will be provided by IMS.

The review team will have extensive consultations with all involved IMS staff and key Danish and Arab partners. The team will be asked to participate in selected project activities with Arab partners if this fits into the time schedule. In addition, towards the end of the review period, the review team will present its findings and observations during a de-briefing session to which 1 or 2 partner representatives from each component will be invited to participate or contribute with written input. The purpose of the de-briefing meeting will be to elaborate key recommendations of the review in a participatory manner. The final recommendations, however, will be made by the external consultant.

G. Review team:

The review will be led by an IMS appointed external consultant.

H. Duration:

The review will run from November 2006 to the beginning of January 2007.

It is expected that the team leader will need approximately 6 weeks (or a maximum of 30 working days) for completion of the assignment – with approximately 9 days in the region and 7 days in Denmark.

I. Reporting:

The team leader shall submit a final report with key conclusions and recommendations by 15 January 2007.

The review team should work in an open and transparent manner and in close consultation with IMS so as to enable IMS and its partners to engage in internal deliberations on the content of the second phase of the media programme.

Annex 2 - List of individuals interviewed

Component 1

Media monitoring:

Moataz El fegiery, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Egypt

Sihem Bensedrine, National Council for Human Rights Studies, Tunisia

Ezzedine al-Asbahi, Human Rights Information and Training Center, Yemen

Abdul Hadi al Khawaeh, Bahrain centre for Human Rights

Eye on the Arab media:

Sawsan Zaideh, Editor-in-Chief/Producer, Amman Net, Jordan

Daoud Kuttab, Director, Amman Net, Jordan

Legal protection

Mr. Jan Keulen, Free Voice, The Netherlands

Mr. Nedal Mansour, Center for Defense of Freedom of Journalists, Jordan

Component 2 – Union Capacity Building

Mr. Mogens Blicher Bjerregaard, Head, Danish Journalists Union, Denmark

Ms. Bodil Rahbek, Danish Union of Journalists member, Denmark

Mr. Oliver Money-Kyrle, IFJ, Programme Director, Belgium

Component 3 – ARIJ

Mr. Nabil Dajani, Chairman of ARIJ board, American University of Beirut

Ms. Pia Thordsen, member of ARIJ board, Denmark

Ms. Rana Sabbagh, member of ARIJ board, Jordan

Mr. Daoud Kuttab, member of ARIJ board, Jordan

Ms. Sahar Sabab, Project Coordinator of ARIJ, Jordan

Component 4 – TV Co-production and exchange

Ms. Tjill Dreyer, Danish TV, Denmark

Mr. Ralph Graziani, freelance journalist and trainer, Jordan

Mrs. Hala Zureiqat, Director for Training and Development, Jordanian TV

Mr. Jonathan Herrik, freelance journalist and trainer, Syria

Mr. Ismail Moherat, TV Jordan, member of productions unit

Ms. Awni Kandah, TV Jordan, member of productions unit

Mr. Worod Khazali, TV Jordan, member of productions unit

Ms. Maram al Shareef, TV Jordan, member of productions unit

Component 5 – Arab Institute of Film

Mr. Arne Bro, Danish Film School, Denmark

Mr. Flemming Lyngse, independent film maker and trainer for Institute, Denmark

Mr. Anders Østergaard, independent film maker and trainer for Institute, Denmark

Mr. Hesham Bizri, founder of AIF, residing in the United States

Mr. Omar Amiralay, founder of AIF, residing in Syria

Ms. Hala Gala, Samet Productions, Egypt

Mr. Jad Abi-Khalil, Beirut DC, Lebanon

Mr. Jakob Høgel, board member of Institute, Denmark

Component 6 – Twinning Programme

Mr. Orwa Nyrabia, ProAction Films, Syria

Mrs. Diana El Jeiroudi, ProAction Film, Syria

Mr. Mikael Opstrup, Final Cut Productions, Denmark

Mr. Abdelsalam Akkad, Greyscale, Lebanon

Mr. Mik Aidt, Mild Production, Denmark

Mr. Georg Larson, Danish Radio –Culture Department, Denmark

IMS

Mr. Jesper Højberg, Executive Director

Mrs. Eva Raabymagle, deputy Director, IMS

Mrs. Lotte Dhalmann, current ME Programme Director

Mr. Waseem Mahmoud, former Middle East programme director

Mr. Torben Brandt, Twinning programme coordinator

Mr. Rasmus Steen, Twinning programme coordinator

Annex 3 - Roles of IMS within its partnerships

	Media Monitoring	Eye on Media	Legal protection	CB of Unions	ARIJ	TV production exchange	AIF	Twining
Funder	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advisor	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Manager	X				X (until recently)	X	X (Until recently)	X
Broker	X			X		X	X	X
Policy Maker					X (non-voting board member)	X	X (member of founding association)	X

Annex 4 - Dimensions of quality of work to be measured

Component	Dimensions of quality
Sub-component 1.1 Media Monitoring	Quality of training provided Quality of monitoring activities Measuring outcome and impact of activities on target group
Sub-Component 1.2 Eye on the Arab Media	Quality of weekly reports Quality of partnerships with other radio stations and newspapers re-broadcasting or re-printing reports. Measuring outcome and impact of activities on target group
Sub-Component 1.3 Legal protection	Quality of training provided Quality of partnership between Free Voice and CDFJ Quality of project coordination Measuring outcome and impact of activities on target group
Component 2: Union C.B.	Quality of training/capacity building provided Measuring outcome and impact Quality of project coordination Quality of relationship between IFJ and DUJ
Component 3: ARIJ	Quality of organisational development Quality of project coordination Quality of training Quality of investigations Measuring outcome and impact on target group
Component 4: TV production & exchange	Quality of coordination Quality of relationship between IMS and TV station management Quality of training Quality of productions Measuring outcome and impact of activities on target group
Component 5: Arab Institute of Film	Quality of organisational development Quality of coordination of projects Quality of training Quality of productions Measuring outcome and impact on target group
Component 6: Twinning	Quality of coordination of project Quality of "match" Quality of products Measuring outcome and impact on target group

Annex 5 - An Outcomes Framework

An outcome framework includes:

- Defining a specific participant or client target group
- Defining the desired outcomes for that target group (expected or intended outcomes)
- One or more indicators for each desired outcome (consider short- or long-term term indicators, make sure they are reasonable, useful, and a meaningful measure of the intended outcome)
- Details for data collection (what data will be used and how will they be assessed; who will be responsible for data collection; how often collected; how often reported; will data be gathered about all clients or just a sample; how will findings be reported, to whom? how often?)
- Deciding on how results will be used (given what you want the evaluation to accomplish, have we focused on the right outcomes and useful indicators?)

For more information on outcomes frameworks, see the materials produced by the Canadian International Development Research Center on *Outcome Mapping*.

Annex 6 - The Action Learning Cycle as a Tool

(excerpted from Action Learning – a developmental approach to change by James Taylor, Dirk Marais and Allan Kaplan¹² for the Centre for Developmental Practice (CDRA))

Action Learning is a continuous cycle - the end of each learning cycle becomes the beginning of the next cycle.

Action: Doing/experiencing and recalling the experience: nobody knows your experience of your actions better than you do. To become more conscious of our “experience” while acting, can impact on the next step quite dramatically.

Some useful questions: *What significant things happened? Describe the events. Who was involved, what did they do? What picture emerges? How did I/we feel?*

Reflection: Re-examining and thinking about the event or action means to make it more conscious, to analyse it, to evaluate it, to understand it better or on a deeper level. The problem is that we do not do this normally. Often it is only as a result of a crisis that we reflect, that we stop to take a deeper look. A more pro-active approach is vital to become a good action learner. This is very much a “brain storm” activity where we would look at the event from different angles.

Some useful questions: *Why did it happen, what caused it? What helped, what hindered? What did we expect? What assumptions did we make? What really struck us? Do we know of any other experiences or thinking that might help us look at this experience differently?*

Learning: Reflection is no guarantee that learning has taken place! Very often people “reflect” on practice and repeat the same mistake over and over again. Therefore the distinction between **reflection** and **learning** in the AL Cycle is important; learning here is the process of distilling or drawing out the **core generalised lessons**; moving from “what actually happened” to “what tends to happen as a result of such circumstances”. Be careful of jumping to learning before adequate reflecting has taken place.

Some useful questions: *What would we have done differently? What did we learn, what new insights? What was confirmed? What new questions have emerged? What other theories help us to deepen these learnings?*

Planning: This is the key link between past learning and future action (and learning). The core “insights” from the previous step must now be translated into decisions that will ensure improved practice and these decisions then need to become part of the plan. Planning that is unrelated to learning from the past is nearly always a waste of time!

Some useful questions: *So what does this mean for practice? What do we want? What do we want to do, to happen? How? What are we going to do differently? How will we not repeat the same mistake? What do we have to let go of or stop doing? What steps will we use to build these new insights into our practice?*