

The Asian Media Barometer (ANMB)

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Asia Media Project developed in 2008/09 the Asian Media Barometer following the successful implementation of the African Media Barometer by FES's Southern African Media Project 2005. The Asian Media Barometer is a self assessment exercise done by Asians themselves according to homegrown criteria. The project is the first in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the Asian continent.

While various peer review mechanisms and agreements amongst and between Asian countries pertaining to trade and economics are in place, at present a similar peer review mechanism for freedom of expression, democracy and human rights is lacking. There have been individual attempts in several countries, especially South Asian countries to come up with a charter as well as indicators on freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Unfortunately it has not been successfully implemented within individual countries let alone on a sub-regional, or a more ambitious regional scale. In fact the joint declaration by UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression notes that Asia-Pacific region lacks such a mechanism (<http://www.article19.org/pdfs/standards/four-mandates-dec-2006.pdf>).

Methodology: A panel of experts is formed in each country, including representatives of media and civil society at large in equal numbers. They are serving as panel members in their personal capacities, not as representatives of their respective organisations. The panel consists of not more than ten members¹. They will meet bi-annually for two days retreats to go in a self-assessment process through the indicators in a qualitative discussion and determine (quantitative) scores for each indicator. The meetings will be chaired by an FES consultant to ensure comparable results. The resulting reports are made public.

¹ However, in some countries it seems to be advisable to include one additional panellist from a Government affiliated media agency.

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Scoring system: Panel members are asked to allocate their individual scores to the respective indicators after the qualitative discussion in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator.
- 2 Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator.
- 3 Country meets many aspects of indicator but progress may be too recent to judge.
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator and has been doing so over time.

Scores for each sector are determined as follows: Members of the panel will, after a qualitative group discussion, attach their individual point-score (1 – 5) to each sub-indicator of a sector. The sum of all individual scores will be divided by the number of panel members. The result will then be considered the final score for the sub-indicator.

This qualitative report, including the scores, serves the purpose of measuring over time (based on bi-annual repetitions of the panel meetings) the progress or otherwise developments in the media landscape.

Dr Paul Pasch
Head of FES-Media-Asia Project
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia