

Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media



Annual Work Report 2023

Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media

*Submitted by the Global Forum for Media Development,
in the capacity of DC-Journalism Secretariat*



1. Background info about the DC

Established in April 2019 the Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media (DC-Journalism)¹ is a multi-stakeholder initiative formally operating within the IGF that is meant to be a hub for the journalism, news media, press freedom, journalism support, and media development communities to engage with important Internet governance and digital policy matters.

The DC-Journalism arose as a key recommendation in a [2018 issue paper](#) produced by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) and partners. The paper specifically identified the sustainability of journalism and news media in the digital age as an area that urgently requires greater policy support. In the five years since it was launched, the Dynamic Coalition has evolved into a lively platform for conversations about media sustainability. With its global membership, it has become a valuable space to collectively evaluate national-level opportunities and barriers to different solutions currently being explored by governments, advocacy organisations, and newsrooms as they independently look to diversify income streams. More information is available at: <https://groups.io/g/dc-sustainability>.

2. Activities conducted in the past year

Activities within the IGF

During the 2023 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in October, the Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media (DC-Journalism) organised the session on [Data, Access & Transparency: A Trifecta for Sustainable News](#)² (based on the agreement and interest showcased by its members during the first convening in January 2023). The session included experts from various sectors to discuss the changing regulatory landscape's impact on the media industry, focusing on data, access, and transparency in light of the EU's Digital Services Act and similar policies worldwide. The meeting was co-chaired by Courtney Radsch, Open Markets Institute (USA), Waqas Naeem, International Media Support (Pakistan) and Daniel O'Maley, Center for International Media Assistance (USA) and brought together more than **30** participants both online and in-person. The goal of the session was to generate insights and recommendations that support the sustainability and growth of journalism and news media organisations amidst evolving regulations, as well as to launch the [2023 DC-Journalism Annual Report](#).

¹ In 2023, the Dynamic Coalition rebranded its short name to DC-Journalism from DC-Sustainability. This document uses the new short name throughout, including with reference to activities in the past.

² You can view the session [here](#) and read the briefing [here](#).



From left to right: Juliet Nanfuka (CIPESA - Uganda), Daniel O'Maley and Courtney Radsch (co-coordinators of the DC-Journalism) and Julius Endert (DW Akademie) during the IGF 2023 session on "Data, Access & Transparency: A Trifecta for Sustainable News"

2023 Annual Report: Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media (October 2023)

The 2023 Annual Report was edited by the DC-Sustainability Co-coordinators Daniel O'Maley, Waqas Naeem, and Courtney C. Radsch. The report brings together diverse voices and perspectives related to the linkages between media viability and Internet governance—offering detailed examinations of specific issues while also zooming out to consider their broader implications for the sustainability of journalism and news media in the digital and AI era. Through the lens of data, access, and transparency, it presents a complex, interwoven narrative demanding not only attention but also action about the use of competition laws for media revenue, resolving the uncertainty caused to the news industry by generative AI, providing access to data for news publishers and researchers from Big Tech companies and equitable support to news media globally. The report features contributions from Prue Clarke, Mike Harris, Juliana Harsianti, Juliet Nanfuka, Tharin Pillay and Maureen Sieh.

Activities beyond the IGF

Coordination call for members

On January 30th, a DC-Journalism meeting was held with members of the coalition to discuss its activity plan for the year. A total of 27 members of the group attended the meeting, in which it was agreed that the **main focus area** for the year and the annual report would be **"Data, Access, and Transparency" and their role in media sustainability**. After the meeting, the DC co-coordinators launched a call for papers for the annual report in relation to the topic. In June, five articles were selected and reviewed by the Peer Review Committee, composed of three members of the DC-Journalism. The report was published in October ahead of the IGF meeting in Japan. This first meeting allowed members of the DC-Journalism to agree on a main focus area related to the most pressing issues for the group, and plan ahead the activities for the year.

Learning Calls

In April, the DC-Journalism organised a learning call with the **Director of News Ecosystem Development at Google, and the Senior Director for Democracy Forward at Microsoft**, to discuss how their respective companies are thinking of news sustainability amid challenges posed by digital technology. Under Chatham House rules, participants discussed the importance of safeguarding democratic institutions and addressing the decline of local news through sustainable funding, creating innovative business models or by supporting the digital transformation of smaller news outlets. AI, copyright issues, and the need for media literacy were also raised during the Q&A session. The learning call enabled the DC to build on its existing relationship with Google News Initiative and also engage for the first time with Microsoft, which launched a media viability accelerator in 2023 as a public-private partnership with USAID and Internews.

During the 12th edition of **RightsCon**, the DC-Journalism organised the session “**Assessing regulatory interventions into the platform-press relationship**”. The session discussed learnings from Australia, Indonesia, India, Brazil, Canada, the US and elsewhere in how to craft new media-tech laws in ways that ensure independent quality journalism while avoiding opening the door to undue government or platform influence or further entrenching dominant players and other unintended negative consequences. It also discussed alternatives to direct taxation and subsidies, such as through industry actions, changes to the advertising economy, and more. The RightsCon session allowed the DC to engage with BBC Media Action, especially its work on legal enactment of news bargaining in Indonesia. Additionally, the DC-Sustainability hosted a Happy Hour event for existing and potential new members, which successfully contributed to enlarging the membership and enabled a space for current members to network and meet two of the co-coordinators in person.

In July, the DC-Journalism engaged with **media regulators** (Ofcom and UK Competition and Markets Authority) to organise a learning call. The session brought together **28** participants from different organisations, such as Associação de Jornalismo Digital (AJOR), Tech for Peace (T4P), Media Council of Malawi, Global Media Registry, DW Academy, CIMA and InternetLab). The aim of this learning call was to deliver an introductory exchange between international civil society stakeholders and media regulators on the topic of media plurality and sustainability. It took place at a time when the research community plays a key role in bringing evidence-led contributions to policy debates on media plurality and sustainability issues, and when several regulators, Ofcom among them, are actively developing potential policy recommendations to address relevant areas of concern and harm. The session generated useful outreach for DC and its members to the regulators in the UK and through their contacts to the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA). The dynamic coalition intends to continue its outreach to media regulators from other countries and regions in the future.

More broadly, members of the dynamic coalition routinely share information, invite each other to relevant events, and collaborate on issues that come out of the coalition's work.

Assessment of the priorities and objectives for 2023

Priority / Objective	Month - Activity	Outcomes/Discussion
Planning meetings with DC-Journalism Members	<i>January - Coordination call</i>	Members exposed their preferences for the topics to discuss during the year and for the Annual Report Decision on the topic for the IGF2023 session, focused on Data, Access and Transparency
Learning Calls (at least two of these learning calls to be organised during 2023)	<i>April - Google and Microsoft</i>	Members were able to discuss with Google's and Microsoft's representatives issues affecting the sustainability of the media and journalist sectors on their platforms and ways to cooperate further
	<i>June - RightsCon session on assessing regulatory interventions</i>	Discussion on how to craft new media-tech laws in ways that ensure independent, quality journalism
	<i>July - Media Regulators and plurality in the platforms era</i>	Exchange between international civil society stakeholders and media regulators on the topic of media plurality and sustainability.
IGF 2023	<i>October - IGF 2023 Data, Access & Transparency: A Trifecta for Sustainable News</i>	Information about the session, report and key takeaways are available here.
2023 DC-Journalism Report	<i>October - Launch of the Annual Report</i>	2023 Annual Report: Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media
Other	<i>April - Update of the Resource Page</i>	Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media - GFMD Policy & Advocacy Center
	<i>June - Happy Hour during RightsCon 2023</i>	Around 30 people joined the event (both members and new members). Thanks to this and other engagements, the mailing list currently has 77 more members.

3. Updates on internal processes

The GFMD-coordinated mailing list of the Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media (DC-Journalism) is an active hub for discussion on the links between Internet governance and media sustainability. The group currently has 334 members. During 2023, there

were around 100 updates and messages sent to the mailing list, many of which sparked active discussion between members, creating more than 50 email threads.

The Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media has officially changed its short-name to DC-Journalism. Whereas changes in the internal documents and mailing lists are expected to be implemented during 2024, it is firmly believed that this change will improve the communication related to the focus and key areas that this Dynamic Coalition aims to address.

4. Priorities/objectives for 2024

The main goal of the DC-Journalism work plan for 2024 is to keep re-engaging the community and encouraging its members to be more involved in topics and issues related to internet governance and media development. Building on the positive performance and outcomes of the activities previously outlined for 2023, the newly renamed DC-Journalism will continue to organise and coordinate:

- **2024 DC-Journalism Report:** Production of a collaborative report on issues that affect media sustainability in the digital sphere. The coordinators will launch a call for proposals to compile research and studies from the DC-Journalism members.
- **Learning Calls:** The objective of this activity is to encourage DC-Journalism members to exchange knowledge and facilitate interactive and constructive dialogue among them. These calls will also include the participation of relevant experts or platform representatives that could inform and update members on emerging issues, new policies developments, etc. Based on 2023's performance, the DC-Journalism aims to organise at least two learning calls during 2024.
- **Engagement with DC-Journalism members:** To ensure an open-participation of the members of the Dynamic Coalition, coordination calls, email threads and other communications with planning purposes will be open to all members.
- **IGF 2024:** The DC will submit a session proposal to conduct a discussion of stakeholders around its chosen themes for 2024, including the impact of AI on news media sustainability. The proposed session will also allow time for online and offline members of the coalition to share updates about their current work, focus areas and future priorities.