

the evaluation partnership 



Feasibility study
for the preparatory action
“ERASMUS for journalists”

FINAL REPORT

February 2011

Feasibility study for the preparatory action “ERASMUS for journalists”

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Final Report

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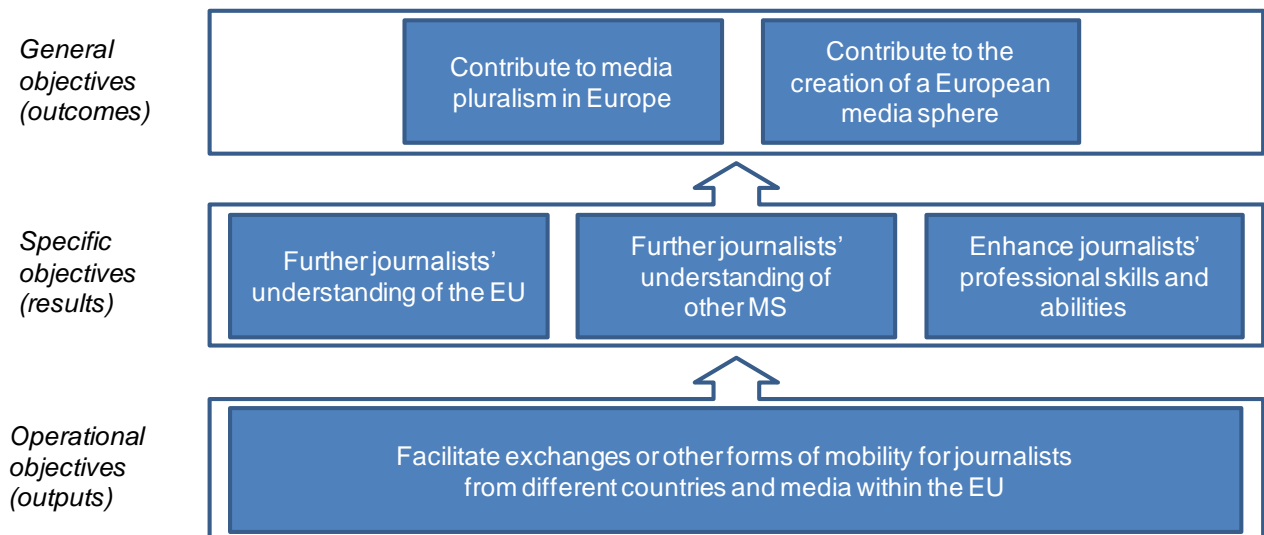
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0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the EU’s budget for 2010, the European Parliament proposed a preparatory action and allocated a budget for it with the aim of preparing a preparatory action provisionally called “ERASMUS for journalists” to “give journalists the possibility of exchange with journalists and media from other European countries”. The present study was carried out between April and December 2010 to analyse the feasibility of this initiative, as well as to elaborate an implementation scheme for a preparatory action, in order to test the approach and provide key information to feed into the development of a potential full-scale programme to be designed and implemented at a future date.

Objectives

Based on an in-depth analysis of the proposed programme’s intervention logic, the following objectives were identified:



The initiative is to pursue all objectives shown above. However, at the level of general objectives (expected final outcomes), the emphasis should be placed on the contribution to the creation of a European media sphere (through enhancing the quantity and quality of coverage of European issues in the national media). Contributing to media pluralism is a secondary objective; while exchanges between journalists can go some way towards providing citizens with access to a variety of opinions and voices, they do not tackle the critical issue of media ownership.

At the level of specific objectives (expected intermediate results), the proposed programme’s key added value and unique selling point should be furthering journalists’ understanding of other Member States, their media and cultures. To the extent possible, the programme should also further journalists’ understanding of the EU (in the more institutional sense), and enhance their journalistic skills and abilities (through peer learning).

Feasibility

Based on the analysis carried out during the study (including the review of similar programmes, the views and opinions of the expert panel assembled for this study, the development and testing

of the intervention logic, and an extensive fieldwork programme), the study concludes that an ERASMUS for journalists programme is feasible, and could potentially contribute (albeit to a varying extent) to achieving all of the objectives that have been set.

Especially at a time of severe budgetary limitations, an initiative that allows for experience abroad is intrinsically interesting for journalists. However, the current difficult situation of many media outlets also brings with it significant challenges for the successful implementation of the programme. While the fieldwork suggests that most media outlets would be interested in principle in participating in an ERASMUS for journalists programme, the economic pressure limits the ability and willingness of many to let staff leave their posts for any extended period of time, and/or invest significant resources in hosting a foreign journalist.

In order to be practically feasible, a successful exchange programme aimed at working journalists will have to take this factor into account, *inter alia* by ensuring that visits provide clear benefits to all involved parties, that they serve a journalistic purpose (and not only very general learning about other cultures), and that the duration of visits is in line with the needs of and constraints facing all involved parties.

The mechanisms for matching journalists with appropriate host media organisations also need to be carefully considered. Depending on his or her field of work, each journalist will tend to be interested in visiting very specific types of media. Some media will be naturally more attractive as host organisations, partly because of their size and prestige, partly because of the fact that they work in languages that are spoken by a relatively higher proportion of the target audience. On the other hand, the profile and skills (including language skills) of applicants are a key factor in determining host organisation’s willingness to host them. These factors have the potential to lead to a mismatch between supply and demand, and potentially a geographical imbalance in the way programme funding is disbursed.

The exchange visits

The feasibility study identified, explored and analysed several possible types of exchange visits (or more precisely, forms of mobility) that could be supported (including group or individual visits, unidirectional or reciprocal visits), as well as different parameters (such as the duration, tasks and themes, eligibility criteria, etc.). Based on the results of the analysis, and keeping in mind the challenges that were identified, the study recommends:

- The test phase of the preparatory action should facilitate working visits of journalists to media outlets in another Member State. The project should actively encourage, but not require reciprocity (i.e. two-way exchanges, staged or simultaneous, between media outlets).
- In order to ensure the programme caters to the different interests and needs of the target audiences, the match-making should follow a de-centralised approach. Rather than applying to the programme in general and then being placed at a specific media outlet, journalists themselves will have to identify, contact and obtain agreement from an appropriate host organisation before applying.
- The duration of visits should be set at between two and six weeks. This period of time represents an appropriate balance between desirability (allowing for real learning and the potential to have direct and indirect impacts) and feasibility (in terms of compatibility with the economic and other realities of the journalistic profession).

- The content and objectives of individual visits should be kept flexible and defined jointly by journalists and hosts in order to cater to the differing needs and interests of both sides. The basic premise is that visitors will be integrated to the greatest extent possible in the work of their host media, but this does not preclude them from filing occasional articles with their home organisation, and/or from collecting information that can be turned into a journalistic output after they return to their posts.
- Both journalists who are staff members of media outlets and freelancers with a minimum of two years of experience are eligible to participate. Whether proficiency in the language of the host organisation is necessary depends on the requirements of the host.

Project management

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the test phase, and guarantee editorial independence for participants, the Commission should appoint an intermediary organisation (IO) to run the project. The IO should ideally demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the journalism sector and a good network of contacts among European media organisations; the ability to administer exchange and/or scholarship programmes; and organisational, operational and financial independence from the media corporations, national governments and the EU. Among the key tasks of the IO will be:

- Invite and review applications: Applications should be invited and reviewed every three months. Under the de-centralised approach, journalists will have to have secured the agreement of the media outlet they wish to visit before submitting their application. A project database will facilitate this process. Applications will have to clearly state the objectives of the visit, and be accompanied by a declaration signed by both visitor and host and an endorsement letter from the editor of (one of the) media that the applicant works for in his or her home country.
- Select participants: Given the exploratory nature of the test phase, its limited financial envelope and duration, and the importance of minimising administrative burdens and reaching decisions quickly, it is proposed that participants should be selected on a first-come, first-served basis (rather than competitively). However, in order to ensure a minimum level of geographical balance, no more than 20% of visits should be to or from any single country.
- Disburse funding: Similarly to other mobility / exchange programmes, the ERASMUS for journalists programme should cover the extra costs that participants incur, namely travel and subsistence expenses. Funding should be disbursed as an advance payment. The level of financial support should be in line with the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, and depend on the length of the stay and the cost of living in the country visited.
- Information and communication: In order to raise awareness and disseminate information among the target audiences, a number of tools and activities should be used, including a programme website, a press release and conference, and a promotional leaflet.
- Evaluation and monitoring: To enable effective evaluation, relevant data and information should be collected throughout the duration of the test phase.

Budget

The budget for the first year¹ of the test phase has been set at EUR 600,000. This will provide support for approximately 180 individual visits. Based on the assumptions and estimates made in this study, approximately two thirds of the funds will be disbursed directly to participants; the remaining third will cover project management costs. Should the project be continued for a further year, and/or eventually turned into a full-scale programme, the relative weight of the costs incurred for project management is expected to decrease, to around 25% of the total available budget.

¹ Preparatory Actions can run for three years without a legal base, assuming funding is allocated each successive year. This study was funded by an allocation on the 2010 EU budget. It follows that there could be a test phase of up to two years, assuming that funding is once again allocated in 2011, with the possibility of a full programme being proposed in 2012, subject to evaluation and political support.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is the fifth and final deliverable submitted by The Evaluation Partnership (TEP) together with Economisti Associati (EA) and the European Journalism Centre (EJC) in the context of the Feasibility study for the preparatory action “ERASMUS for journalists”.

The main purpose of this report is to present the complete results of the feasibility study itself (part 1 of the assignment),² and provide guidance and orientation to the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders for the eventual implementation of the “ERASMUS for journalists” initiative.

This report consists of the following sections:

- Section 2 briefly outlines the background and purpose of this study, and provides a summary overview of the approach and methods that were used.
- Section 3 presents the proposed programme’s intervention logic, and analyses its context, objectives, uncertainties, constraints and critical conditions, culminating in preliminary conclusions regarding its feasibility.
- Section 4 presents the main results of the fieldwork that was carried out to gauge the level of interest among the potential target audiences for an “ERASMUS for journalists” programme, and to test the different hypotheses, scenarios and approaches that were developed during the previous stage of the assignment.
- Section 5 builds on the analysis in the previous sections, and describes the proposed implementation scheme for the test phase of the preparatory action “ERASMUS for journalists”, including key project parameters such as the envisaged type and duration of visits, aspects related to the implementation and management of the project, an estimate of its costs, and a register of key risks.
- The annexes (submitted as separate documents) contain a number of supporting materials. Annex A contains the detailed results of the research that was carried out, including the review of similar programmes, the fieldwork, and the stakeholder workshop. Annex B contains technical specifications and materials related to the implementation of the test phase, including draft versions of the manual for the intermediary organisation and the applicant’s guide.

² It should be noted that the present report only covers Part 1 of the assignment, which relates to the feasibility study as such. The results of Part 2 of the assignment, which compiled and analysed statistical data on the current state of journalism and the media sector in Europe, will be presented in a separate report in early 2011.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND APPROACH TO THE STUDY

2.1 The purpose of this study

In the EU’s budget for 2010, the European Parliament (EP) proposed a preparatory action (budget reference line 09 06 05) and allocated a budget for it with the aim of preparing, in due course, a preparatory action provisionally called “ERASMUS for journalists”.³ In its justification, the EP noted that the EU “should create truly European media”, and that one way to ensure this is to “give journalists the possibility of exchange with journalists and media from other European countries” so that they can “gain a broader understanding of the European Union and its different media and cultures”. Furthermore, the EP stated that an “ERASMUS for journalists” could contribute to the goal of ensuring pluralism in Europe by giving journalists “access to pluralism”.

As part of the preparatory action, the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Information Society and Media (DG INFSO) decided to commission an exploratory study to provide critical information to feed into the decision-making on and design of an eventual test phase of the “ERASMUS for journalists” preparatory action and a possible full-scale programme (to be launched at a later date, depending on the outcomes of the preparatory action). This study is to assess the feasibility and desirability of launching a mobility scheme, inter alia by assessing and testing its underlying intervention logic and by consulting the envisaged target audiences. Furthermore, provided the project is feasible, the study is to elaborate a scheme that allows the project to be implemented in the most effective way, keeping in mind the objectives as defined by the EP.

More specifically, the Terms of Reference defined the following six key tasks for the feasibility study:

- Task 1: Assess and test the intervention logic of the EP’s proposal
- Task 2: Elaborate an implementation scheme for the test phase and the larger programme
- Task 3: Develop an evaluation method for the preparatory action
- Task 4: Estimate costs for the test phase and main programme
- Task 5: Elaborate communication-related issues
- Task 6: Identify and analyse risks

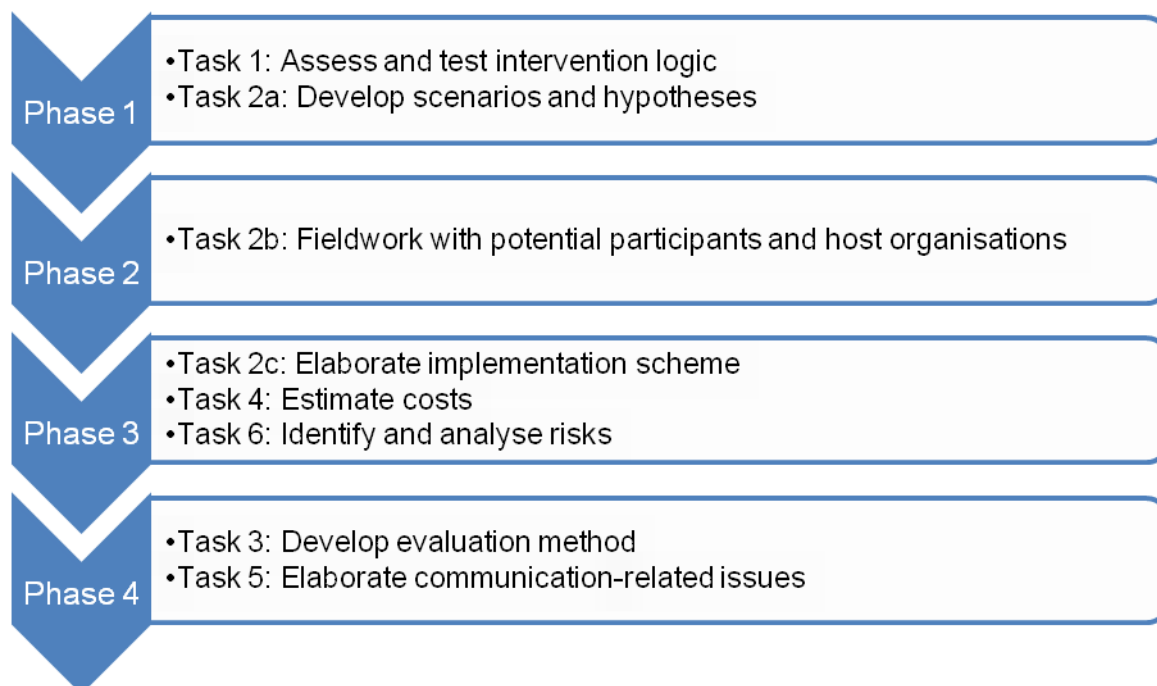
2.2 Study approach and methods

This study was carried out between April and December 2010 by The Evaluation Partnership in collaboration with Economisti Associati and the European Journalism Centre. An expert panel consisting of experienced journalists and academic experts was set up to provide expert input and

³ The preparatory action has its legal base in Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16 September 2002, p. 1), as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 (OJ L 390, 30 December 2006, p. 1).

advice to the core study team.⁴ In order to meet its objectives and carry out the tasks listed above, the feasibility study was divided into four main phases (see the diagram below).

Figure 1: Phases of the Feasibility study



Phase 1 was dedicated to primarily desk-based research with a view to a) undertaking an initial assessment of the feasibility of the project and the likelihood of achieving its objectives, and b) preparing for the ensuing fieldwork. During this phase, the following main activities were carried out:

- Compile information on the proposed programme and similar programmes: The study team reviewed all available documentation on the proposed ERASMUS for journalists initiative, and also met with its instigators in the EP and with the responsible officials in DG INFSO. Furthermore, it identified a list of relevant existing programmes from which lessons could be learned (including both journalistic exchange programmes and mobility programmes in other sectors), and undertook an analysis of a sample of such programmes based on the review of programme documentation and a series of interviews with programme managers.
- Develop and test the intervention logic: As a basis for the initial analysis of the proposed programme’s feasibility, the study team analysed its intervention logic, including its context, the envisaged objectives, their interlinkages and the causality chain between them, and the activities and inputs necessary to achieve these objectives. This analysis built on the experiences of similar programmes, and the testing of their applicability to the

⁴ The expert panel consisted of Mr Richard E. Collins, Professor of Media Studies, Department of Sociology, Open University, UK; Mr Grzegorz Piechota, senior journalist and Head of Public Awareness & Social Campaigns, Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland; and Mr Mark Rogerson, Executive Director of CONSILIA Ltd, and former TV journalist with the BBC, UK.

specific context. For this purpose, a full-day workshop with the expert panel was held. This allowed the study team to draw preliminary conclusions as to the project’s feasibility and its key uncertainties and challenges, and led to the formulation of a series of working hypotheses that were further explored and tested during the remainder of the study.

- Prepare for the fieldwork: Based on the results of the intervention logic analysis, a series of scenarios and tools were developed to gauge the target audiences’ level of interest, views and reactions during the ensuing fieldwork.
- First interim report: The results of the first phase were presented in a report and discussed with the steering group consisting of officials from DG INFSO and DG COMM.

Phase 2 of the study was dedicated to conducting fieldwork to consult potential project beneficiaries and stakeholders, to test the initial hypotheses and gather further information on the target audiences’ preferences, concerns, level of interest, etc. During this phase, the following main activities were carried out:

- Focus groups with journalists: In order to gather input and feedback from the programme’s main intended beneficiaries, a series of structured group discussions were held. A total of 17 such groups were carried out in eight EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK). Each focus group lasted for approximately two hours, and sought participants’ feedback on the proposed programme and its objectives in general, as well as their reactions to five concrete scenarios that had previously been developed to illustrate how the programme could be implemented in practice. A total of 120 journalists participated in the focus groups. They were recruited to represent a good mix of nationalities, levels of professional experience, gender, types of media, and contractual status (employed or free-lance).
- Interviews with editors: To gauge the views of media outlets, a series of telephone interviews were conducted with editors of media outlets from across the EU. During these interviews, editors were questioned about the willingness of the media they represent to participate in the programme, by hosting a journalist from another Member State and/or by allowing their own staff to participate by spending time at a media outlet abroad. A total of 28 interviews were carried out with editors from 19 different Member States, representing a broadly representative mix of nationalities, types and sizes of media outlets.

Phase 3 of the study was dedicated to analysing and triangulating the data gathered during the previous phases, and developing a proposal for an implementation scheme for the test phase. The following main activities were carried out:

- Elaborate implementation scheme: Taking into account the initial hypotheses and the results of the fieldwork, the study team developed a proposal for the concrete implementation of the test phase, including the types of visits that should be facilitated, the envisaged application and selection process, and key elements related to the management of the project.
- Estimate costs: The costs of the different elements (including funding to be disbursed to programme participants and associated programme management costs) were estimated based on available data for comparable initiatives, the contractors’ own experience, and indicative quotes from specialised service providers.
- Identify and analyse risks: The uncertainties and challenges identified during phase 1 were reviewed and re-considered in light of the fieldwork results, and a comprehensive risk

register developed. The key risks were taken into account in the development of the implementation scheme, and mitigation strategies identified.

- Second interim report: The results of the fieldwork and the proposed implementation scheme were summarised in a report and discussed with the steering group. Relevant elements were subsequently clarified, expanded or revised in response to the steering group's questions and comments.

Phase 4 of the study was dedicated to finalising the proposed implementation scheme, and developing further materials in support of the eventual implementation of the test phase. The following main activities were carried out:

- Develop evaluation method: The study team developed a framework for the evaluation of the results of the test phase of the preparatory action after its finalisation, the results of which should feed into the decision making process about the possible creation of a full-scale programme.
- Elaborate communication-related issues: A set of activities and tools is proposed for raising awareness of the preparatory action among the relevant target audiences and providing key information about the initiative. Guidelines were developed to summarise the main requirements for each of these activities or tools.
- Stakeholder workshop: A workshop with interested organisations and individuals was held on 1 December 2010 in Brussels. This gave stakeholders an opportunity to discuss and comment on the draft results of this study. The feedback and inputs received were taken into account for the final report.
- Develop manual and applicants' guide: After the implementation scheme of the test phase had been finalised, the study team developed a manual for the intermediary organisation that is eventually chosen, and guidelines that contain all relevant information for journalists wishing to apply to the project.

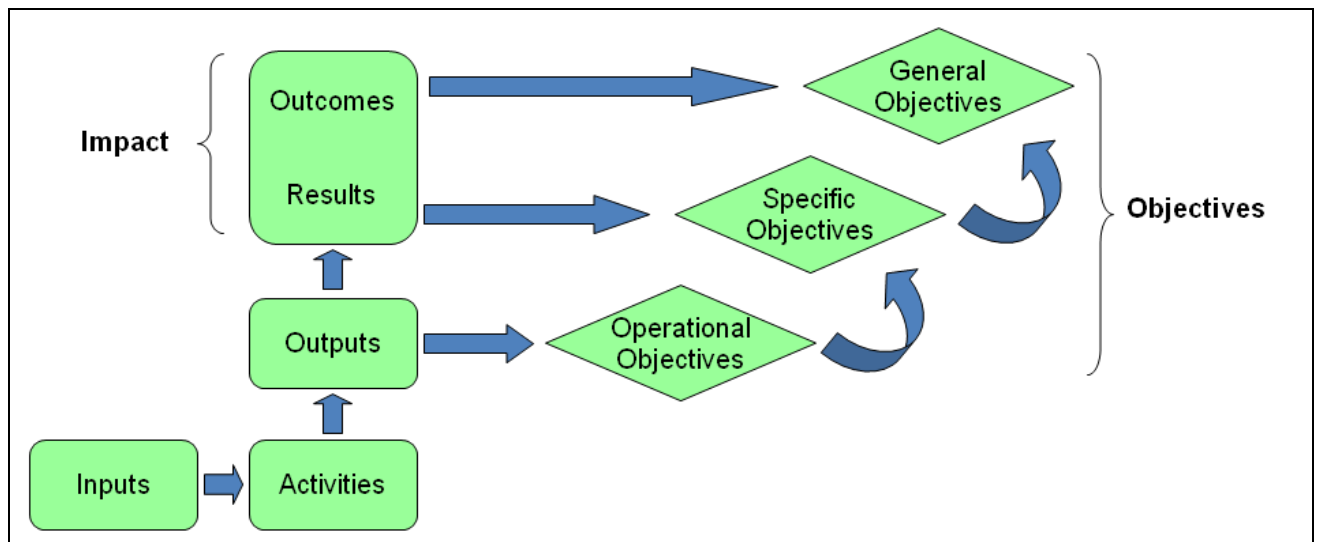
3.0 ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMME INTERVENTION LOGIC

The development, analysis and testing of the proposed programme’s intervention logic is a key element of this study. It systematically clarifies the objectives of the programme, and highlights strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to its successful implementation. As such, the analysis presented in this section, which was developed during phase 1 of the study, prepared the ground for the ensuing data collection and analysis, and was one key factor in ascertaining the programme’s feasibility and optimal implementation mode.

The intervention logic of a programme or project is normally depicted as a series of layers, or levels, of components or objectives (see the diagram below). By analysing the linkages between the different levels, the assumptions underlying them, and the risks and uncertainties to their fulfilment, one can draw important conclusions as to the solidity of an intervention’s design, the likelihood that its different objectives can be achieved, and the critical conditions that must be met in order to enhance the intervention’s chances of success.

Section 3.1 below analyses the context of the proposed ERASMUS for journalists programme, and thereby lays the foundation for developing and testing its intervention logic. Section 3.2 then constructs the intervention logic and introduces the different basic elements. Section 3.3 tests and assesses this intervention logic by analysing uncertainties, constraints and risks. Section 3.4 draws preliminary conclusions as to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the programme, and explores its overall feasibility.

Figure 2: Elements of the intervention logic



3.1 Context analysis

3.1.1 Political and institutional context

Two principal elements define the political and institutional context of a possible ERASMUS for journalists programme, namely (1) the Commission’s longstanding commitment to sponsoring mobility across a wide variety of subject areas ranging from education to research through to professional development and skills; and (2) the EU’s policies related to the media sector specifically (primarily with a view to advancing the internal market, and to ensuring media pluralism).

The idea of facilitating mobility stems from the fact that, at a basic level, the free movement of persons between Member States is one of the fundamental freedoms of the EU. But even in the absence of legal and administrative hurdles to impede this freedom, cultural and linguistic obstacles can prevent its realisation. This points to the need for Europeans to build language and interpersonal skills and networks to enable them to take advantage of the internal market.

In recent years the Commission has released two Action Plans on this subject. In February 2002 it published a Communication on the Commission’s Action Plan for skills and mobility.⁵ The Action Plan addresses the need to increase occupational mobility of workers among the Member States, noting that in 2000 only 0.1% of the European population had established their official residence in another EU country. The priorities of the Action Plan were to expand occupational mobility and skills development; improving information and transparency of job opportunities; and facilitating geographical mobility. Later, in July 2003, the Commission adopted the Action Plan for the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity.⁶ This called for action across three broad areas: extending the benefits of language learning to all citizens as a lifelong activity; improving the quality of language teaching at all levels; and building in Europe an environment which is really favourable to languages.

In practical terms, the Commission has pursued mobility priorities through a series of expenditure programmes run by several Directorates General (DGs) working towards separate but overlapping aims. Some of the more relevant policies include:

- Lifelong Learning Programme (DG EAC): with a budget of nearly EUR 7 billion for the 2007-2013 period, this programme funds a range of actions including exchanges, study visits and networking activities intended for students, those in vocational education, teachers, trainers and other involved in education and training. This includes the ‘flagship’ Erasmus programme for exchanges at higher education level, the Comenius programme for schools, the Leonardo da Vinci programme for vocational education and training and the Grundtvig programme for adult education.
- European Research Area (DG RTD): in 2000, the EU decided to create a European Research Area. Among its goals are to enable researchers to move and interact seamlessly, benefit from world-class institutions and work with excellent networks of research institutions; and to share, teach, value and use knowledge effectively for social, business and policy purposes. Mobility for researchers is also addressed in the 2008 Commission Communication ‘Better careers and more mobility: a European Partnership for Researchers’, which specifically seeks to create a single market for researchers. The

⁵ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11056_en.htm

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/archive/policy/index_en.html

EURAXESS initiative is a key tool to achieving this; inter alia, it funds a network of more than 200 service centres to help researchers and their families relocate to another country.

- ‘Erasmus-like’ programmes: against this backdrop of mobility as a high priority (and the well known success of the Erasmus programme for university students), there have been recent overtures to create similar programmes into other areas. This includes:
 - Erasmus for young entrepreneurs programme, managed by DG ENTR, currently in its pilot phase, which allows young entrepreneurs to spend time with an established entrepreneur in another Member State.
 - Erasmus for local and regional elected officials, managed by DG REGIO, currently in the early phases of preparatory action.
 - Erasmus for public administration, managed by DG ADMIN, which involves the exchange of civil servants between authorities in different Member States.

As regards specific EU policies for the media sector, one key element is media pluralism. The EU’s commitment to protecting media pluralism can be traced back to Article 11 of the Charter on Fundamental Rights, while current policy is embodied in the ‘monitoring approach’ set out in 2007 by Commissioner Reding (then Commissioner for Information Society and Media) and Vice-President Wallström. Their approach consists of three steps and uses a definition of media pluralism that is much broader than media ownership, covering access to varied information so that citizens’ can form opinions without being influenced by a dominant source. It also includes citizens’ need for transparent mechanisms that guarantee that the media are seen as genuinely independent.

A Task Force for Co-ordination of Media Affairs was set up to implement the three steps. First, a Commission Staff Working Paper on Media Pluralism⁷ was presented in January 2007. This outlined efforts to promote pluralism by third parties such as the Council of Europe, and presented a brief survey of Member States’ audiovisual and print-media markets, including indicative data on media ownership regulations and regulatory models across the EU. The Staff Working Paper set the stage for the second step of the approach, which was an independent study on media pluralism in the EU Member States, carried out by a consortium of academic institutes and a consultancy firm,⁸ released in July 2009. The main output of the study was a tool, the Media Pluralism Monitor, designed to diagnose potential risks to media pluralism in Member States. To follow will be a Commission Communication on indicators for media pluralism in EU Member States, which will enable progress or other changes in media pluralism to be better recorded and assessed.

Another EU policy objective is the creation of a ‘European media area’. This is part of the wider objective of creating a European single market; the objective is to “contribute towards a genuine ‘European media area’ that guarantees and reinforces citizens’ choices (...) by ensuring freedom of establishment for companies in the media sector and the free movement of the services they offer”.⁹ The creation of a European media *area* is thus primarily an economic objective, and should not be confounded with the concept of a European media *sphere*, which is not a formal policy objective of the EU, but is nonetheless frequently mentioned by representatives of the EU

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media_taskforce/doc/pluralism/media_pluralism_swp_en.pdf

⁸ The consortium included Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – ICRI, Central European University – CMCS and Jönköping Business School – MMTTC along with Ernst & Young Belgium and the study can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media_taskforce/pluralism/study/index_en.htm.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/media/overview_en.htm

institutions. It refers primarily to the idea of strengthening the pan-European dimension of reporting in the national media of the Member States, and thereby helping to create a European public sphere.

3.1.2 Economic context

The most striking change in the economic situation of ‘legacy’ European journalistic media (i.e. newspapers and radio and television broadcasting) is the adverse impact of the internet on their business models. The internet has reduced consumption of legacy media (people have a finite time budget and time spent using the internet tends, though not invariably, to reduce time spent using legacy media)¹⁰ and reduced legacy media’s advertising revenues.

For more than 100 years, the price paid by consumers and citizens for European public media has been subsidised by advertising revenues (with the qualified exception of a few countries where public service broadcasters have not been advertising financed). But recently, in varying degrees and with significant differences among EU Member States, advertising revenue has migrated to the internet. The auction portal eBay has, to a significant extent, replaced classified advertising in newspapers, while recruitment websites have supplanted job advertising in newspapers, and ‘search’ (Google, Yahoo etc) advertising has displaced display advertising in the press and broadcasting. Between 2007 and 2008, European newspapers’ advertising revenues generally fell in nearly all Member States (except the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland and Romania); the scale of the decrease ranged from just over 20% in Spain to less than 1% in France.¹¹

Of course, these trends are experienced unevenly. For example, the UK is estimated to have twice the global average proportion of its total advertising spend online and the shift from offline to online seems to be accelerating. Of the 2007 UK advertising market of circa GBP 18.4bn, online advertising accounted for around 15% (whereas television accounted for 21%, newspaper display advertising for 20%, and newspaper classified for approximately 15%). Online advertising in the UK grew by 41% between 2005 and 2007 and has now overtaken national press advertising (i.e. not including regional and local papers).¹²

This structural change has been amplified by the cyclical decline in European economies, which has reduced both consumers’ incomes and overall advertising revenues, with both direct and indirect effects on media consumption. *World Press Trends 2009* shows declining circulation, 2007-8, of paid-for-dailies in every European country (except Ireland and Ukraine) for which data is available: falls range from 17.3% in Portugal to 0.21% in France.¹³ In the UK, in 1992, 59% of UK adults read a national daily; by 2006 the total had fallen to 45%.¹⁴

¹⁰ In this context, it is important to note that while the print circulation and readership of newspapers is falling nearly everywhere, the increasing online consumption of content provided by newspapers often more than makes up for this. However, online consumption is much harder for media to turn into revenues, as the average revenue per user of content on the internet is much lower than the one in print.

¹¹ World Association of Newspapers 2009: 55

¹² Source IAB/PWC survey 2007. See also Ofcom (2008) *Communications Market Report 2007*. London.

¹³ World Association of Newspapers 2009: 52

¹⁴ National Readership Survey in House of Lords 2008: 582

We are seeing all the expected responses to such pressures: price rises, mergers and closures,¹⁵ declining standards in content, job losses and worsening working conditions for journalists and media production workers. Again taking a UK example, the share price of Trinity Mirror, a leading newspaper company with interests in both local and national newspaper publishing, fell from GBP 4.77 per share in January 2007 to GBP 3.45 in January 2008 and GBP 0.42 per share in mid October 2008. Not surprisingly, a financial analyst, commenting on the prospects and valuation of Trinity Mirror, stated that “These are desperate times and they call for desperate measures”.¹⁶ Roy Greenslade, formerly editor of the *Daily Mirror* and latterly a highly reputed media expert, has claimed: “media outlets will never generate the kind of income enjoyed by printed newspapers: circulation revenue will vanish and advertising revenue will be much smaller than today. There just won't be the money to afford a large staff”.¹⁷

This intra-media crisis resonates beyond the media economic sector by actually, or potentially, reducing the range and/or quality of media content available at affordable prices to Europeans. Even where public support is established (e.g. through press subsidies and/or publicly funded broadcasting) the worsening commercial media economy has an adverse impact on publicly funded media which tend to experience increasing criticism as “unfair” competitors and as enemies of media pluralism and diversity.

There are striking differences between Member States and between media. The structure of national media varies: the newspaper sector may be highly centralised (a ‘national’ press as in, e.g., the UK) or localised (a ‘regional’ press as in, e.g., Germany); internet penetration varies considerably; some countries (for reasons of size, language and history) are less vulnerable to competition from neighbours (and/or from outside the EU) than others. And various ‘cultural’ and/or developmental differences between Member States may constrain or facilitate the move to the internet (e.g. use of credit cards, efficiency of postal and other delivery services). Generalisation on these matters is dangerous, and data across all Member States is uneven and sometimes missing.

Nonetheless, the overall trends are clear. Essentially, what we are seeing is the effect of the long anticipated convergence of electronic communication media. The UK regulator, Ofcom, exemplifies convergence by claiming “operators are providing services which cross the traditional boundaries of communications”.¹⁸ But the metaphor ‘convergence’ conceals more than it reveals. It suggests everything becoming similar. Although technology and markets may be converging, products and services are becoming highly differentiated: new entrants abound; news aggregators are changing consumption patterns and may (though evidence is, thus far, insufficient to make any judgement definitive) be ‘cannibalising’ their sources’ by diverting readership away from the source (with a negative impact on its advertising and other revenues) though using the sources’ content; ‘legacy’ services hybridise and proliferate; and consumers and providers metamorphose into ‘prosumers’.¹⁹

And here there are opportunities as well as threats. The internet has enabled Europeans to have access to an enormous increase in sources of information: of course linguistic competencies and affordable access to the internet constrain this augmented accessibility but intra-European

¹⁵ *World Press Trends* (World Association of Newspapers 2009: 95) tracks a general decline (though most countries showed no change and a few, e.g. Albania, Russia, Slovenia and Sweden, showing small increases) in European paid-for-non-daily titles in 2007-8 with Austria, showing a fall of 26.27%, Greece a fall of 13.33% and Portugal a fall of 12.12% showing particularly marked declines.

¹⁶ ABN Amro on 1.7.2008

¹⁷ 25.10.2007 at http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/greenslade/2007/10/why_im_saying_farewell_to_the.html

¹⁸ Ofcom (2008) *Communications Market Report 2007*. London. 2008: 13

¹⁹ Providers and consumers.

sources (such as Le Monde Diplomatique, the BBC and the Deutsche Welle); services for intra-European migrants, enabling them to access home country media (Poles in Ireland can read Gazeta Wyborcza etc); and extra-European services (such as internet radio stations like BlackMusic FM from Johannesburg and RadioWave Namibia) are now widely accessible across Europe.

Moreover, the internet has enabled a new journalism to flourish. New sources are available, ranging from e-zines (such as www.openDemocracy.net and www.cafebabel.com) to blogs, as is a new “citizen”, “networked” or “user-generated” journalism. Web 2.0 applications, such as Wikipedia and “citizen” journalism, employ and foster collaboration and dialogue and, at their best accelerate and make more extensive and inclusive the collaborative processes of peer review, critique, factual correction and consensus building that underpin offline scholarship. Citizen, Web 2.0, journalism has at its best an intrinsic self-correcting capacity. But at its worst falls prey to systematic falsification and bias.

Nonetheless, the internet, both as a bearer of new journalistic practices, as a source of new sources of information and a vehicle for established, offline, media to extend their reach has engendered innovative and constructive hybridisation in and with ‘legacy’ media to the extent that it is sometimes hard to distinguish clearly between online and offline journalism and media institutions.

At present, therefore, the European media landscape presents a rich ensemble of threats and opportunities. There is an unprecedented opportunity to encourage, foster and develop an extension of national media to new audiences (www.presseurop.eu is a striking case in point) and to meld the best elements of traditional journalistic practice (ex ante authority procedures of fact checking, multiple sourcing of data, peer review) with those of the new, networked journalism (“wiki” type collaboration and expert consensus building, collective deliberation and dialogue, ‘deep’ presentation of content – e.g. hyperlinks to sources, corrections, and authorial biographies). The threats are no less apparent – despite the growth of web based ‘new’ media it is ‘legacy’ media that provide media content – notably news and current affairs – of a range and authority that still make Europe’s flagship media indispensable.

3.1.3 Social context

As a result of these economic factors, and of globalisation in general, there has been a considerable change of ownership in the media from strategic to financial investors. In Western Europe, many long-established, incumbent publishing dynasties with a genuine interest in providing public value (even if often out of partisan political motivations) were forced to yield to private equity and hedge funds. The new owners applied their typical management toolboxes to media companies in a similar fashion as they would have to any other business, thus effectively reducing journalistic content to a mere marketing factor even at outlets which previously were known to be quality-conscious.

In Central and Eastern Europe, many ‘legacy’ media did not even reach maturity before they were hit by these changes and/or taken over by international conglomerates or financial investors. Plus, the independence and impartiality of public service broadcasting is very diverse within the entire European Union. While some countries hold public television and radio at arm’s length from the state, other governments exert different degrees of influence over ‘pubcasters’.

This is all leading to a major change in the appreciation of journalism as such, the self esteem of active journalists, and career prospects in the sector. These developments affect even the biggest

media organisations, albeit usually to a lesser extent than smaller, regional, or otherwise precarious organisations. Somewhat incongruously, however, journalism schools continue to witness ever-increasing interest in their programmes, leading them to train a growing number of journalists.

The immediate consequence of these twin factors is that an increasing proportion of journalists and journalism graduates find employment not at traditional media but in corporate communications or press offices, where working conditions are better and salaries higher. Indeed, demand for positions such as press officers is rising, as even smaller companies and NGOs consider professional PR management indispensable for effective communication. Often those taking up such positions are lost for journalism, because their move into corporate communications results in a loss of credibility; ironically, their work increasingly shapes the reporting of ostensibly independent media outlets, since pre-fabricated content (e.g. press releases or media briefings) is much more cheaply obtained than genuine journalistic work and usually delivers good production value.

To maintain living standards, those journalists who stay with traditional media are with growing frequency forced to work on fixed-term contracts or as freelancers, to cover larger geographical areas than was previously the norm, or to take on more technical duties including web development, translation and media monitoring. Others simply face pressure to produce more, for multiple platforms at low cost. Journalists must also take on a marketing role, assessing before producing a story whether it is sellable to an audience and / or advertisers.

With a growing proportion of work outsourced to freelancers, newsrooms are emptying out or are being converted into multimedia control centres. Foreign desks, if they are able to be maintained at all, see ever less travel to cover topics in the field. Instead, journalists rely on desk research; networks of foreign correspondents are being scaled back or shut down. Many freelancers do not receive travel reimbursement even when on assignment. Moreover, some legacy media are now adopting the operating methods of the blogosphere, where instead of actual remuneration, being published tends to be seen as its own reward.

Overall, it can be said that the social situation of journalists as a group is becoming increasingly precarious. The numbers of those in adequate permanent employment are shrinking, and low fees earned by freelancers are rendering the job of a journalist unattractive for all but those at the beginning of their careers. Few are able to make a living off journalism alone and are in turn forced to take on additional employment.

In this context, stakeholder journalism continues to gain traction and thus presents yet another challenge to conventional full-time journalists. This stakeholder journalism comes in many shapes, ranging from commercial or interest-driven PR to genuine material submitted by deeply committed experts on specific subject matter to citizen contributors. It finds an outlet primarily in, yet not limited to, blogs.

What members of this disparate group of stakeholder journalists have in common is that publishing is neither their main profession nor a substantial source of income. As more conventional journalists begin to blog on the side, while legacy media begin to draw on stakeholder or citizen sources, the boundaries are blurring to a significant extent.

3.1.4 Problem analysis

Leading on from the political, economic and social situation outlined above, the main problems the ERASMUS for journalists programme is intended to address can be summarised as follows: In the view of the European institutions, there continues to be a relative lack of reporting on ‘European’ affairs (i.e. issues related to the EU and/or its Member States) in the media in the EU Member States, which continues to focus primarily on topics that are of national (and/or regional / local) interest. In addition, there are concerns regarding media pluralism in Europe, which may mean that citizens’ ability to form opinions without being influenced by a dominant source is compromised. The lack of a pan-European perspective in the media is confirmed by a recent research paper, which found that:

“Empirically, we observe that citizens today can find more discussion of EU matters in quality newspapers than 20 years ago following the increase of competencies of the EU. Even in the quality press, however, people will not learn more about what is going on in other European countries. Their opinions cannot be founded in listening more closely to ideas and arguments from speakers from other European countries, as mutual observation and exchange are not increasing. They are not much more likely to read an explicitly European perspective in media.”²⁰

The causes of these problems are likely to be manifold, and include cultural, economic, editorial and other factors. In some cases, the focus of coverage on national issues and topics may well correspond to the (explicit or implicit) preferences of the media’s target audiences. However, what seems clear is that the current and likely future economic difficulties facing media in Europe, and the resulting social situation of journalists, mean that the fledgling European media sphere is under ever greater pressure. As media outlets are forced to cut budgets in general, the opportunities for international travel are reduced drastically, with obvious negative impacts for the quantity and quality of reporting on international (including European) affairs.

By funding exchanges or other forms of mobility, an ERASMUS for journalists programme could contribute to reducing the pressure on media to allow its journalists to experience the situation in other European countries directly, and thereby potentially halting or reversing the trend of stagnating or even declining coverage of European affairs in the national, regional and local media in Europe.

3.1.5 Other programmes

Already existing Commission programmes have been examined in order to assess whether there are potential synergies that could be exploited when setting up a future ERASMUS for journalists programme.

- Leonardo da Vinci: managed by DG EAC under its Lifelong Learning umbrella programme, Leonardo was set up in 1995 to support participants in vocational education and training by facilitating exchange at an enterprise or vocational education institution in another Member State. Although this programme would potentially be open to journalists who are

²⁰ “Segmented Europeanization. The Transnationalization of Public Spheres in Europe: Trends and Patterns”, TranState Working Paper, Bremen, 2006.
http://www.bruegge.net/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=1:publikationen&download=18:segmeurop_transtatewp&Itemid=1

in or have just finished their professional education, they do not form a specific target audience and journalists in employment (the likely target group of any new programme) would be ineligible.

- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs: managed by DG ENTR as a form of SME support, the programme began its pilot phase in 2008 and facilitates placements for young entrepreneurs with host entrepreneurs in another Member State. The aim is for the young entrepreneur to build skills and make contacts that would be useful for the entrepreneur when starting or building his/ her own business in the home Member State. There does not appear to be any scope for this programme to involve journalists.
- EJC seminars: the EJC holds a framework contract with DG COMM to organise seminars for journalists, whereby groups of journalists from across the EU are invited to Brussels and/or to other relevant locations within and beyond Europe to experience EU politics first-hand. The seminar programme presents potential synergies for any new exchange programme for journalists (inter alia since they seek to further participants’ understanding of the EU, and represent a forum for journalists from different Member States to meet and network). One could explore whether a new programme might include a seminar component.

In addition to programmes run by or in co-operation with the Commission, a series of other programmes for journalists were identified and considered in order to avoid risks of duplication and uncover best practices that could be emulated.

- International Journalism Exchange: run by the American Society of Newspaper Editors bringing a small number of journalists from developing countries to the US for a one-month period of training at host newspapers.
- Asian fellowship programme: programme run by the EJC whereby a small number of journalists from Japan and Korea are brought to Brussels for a period of three months in order to learn about European policy and culture. During the fellowship participants attend EU institution meetings, visit EU institutions and visit other European cities, while continuing to contribute to their home publications. In addition, European journalists take part in a shorter (two week) exchange in Japan or Korea during which they visit relevant media outlets and institutions and attend seminars.
- Nahaufnahme: one-to-one exchange for a small number of German and developing-country journalists to spend one month at each others’ media outlets, with a view towards supporting cultural exchange. During the exchange participants contribute to both their home and host organisations.
- German-Dutch journalists’ bursary: run by International Journalists’ Programmes (IJP), the bursary gives up to eight Dutch and eight German journalists a year the opportunity for a working visit in the other country. The delegates work for six to eight weeks in Dutch or German newsrooms of their choice while also researching stories for their home organisation.
- Reuters Institute: programme at Oxford University accepting 25 mid-career journalists per year to tackle subjects of their choice in greater depth than possible under normal deadline pressure, lasting from three to nine months.

- Programa Balboa: programme offering 20 Latin-American journalists per year the chance to spend approximately six months in Madrid, Spain, where they work for a media outlet for four days per week, and undergo academic training on the remaining day.

In addition to these programmes, an exchange between the U.S., Canada and Mexico was run during the 1990s, giving print journalists the opportunity to spend ten weeks at a host newspaper in one of the other countries, with the aim of increasing mutual news coverage and providing a forum for cultural exchange.

For more information on some of the programmes listed above, please refer to annex A1. While the programmes examined do present potential best practices, it is evident that no pan-European programme for the exchange of journalists between different Member States currently exists.

3.2 Programme objectives, activities and inputs

3.2.1 General and specific objectives

The European Parliament’s decision on the preparatory action for an “ERASMUS for journalists” programme stated the following objectives:

Ensuring pluralism in Europe is one of the most important goals of EU media policies. An effective way to enhance pluralism is to give journalists access to pluralism. This could be achieved by financing exchanges of journalists between different countries and media within the European Union. The goal is to enable journalists to gain a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the European Union and its different media and cultures.

From this text, one can draw out two main aspects / goals for the programme:

- Ensure / enhance media pluralism in Europe;
- Enable journalists to gain a better understanding of the EU and its different media and cultures.

Media pluralism (the first of these objectives) is the subject of the Commission’s 2007 staff working paper,²¹ which clarifies that media pluralism is not only about plurality or concentration of ownership. Instead, ensuring media pluralism “implies all measures that ensure citizens’ access to a variety of information sources, opinion, voices etc. in order to form their opinion without the undue influence of one dominant opinion forming power.”

A better understanding of the EU (the second objective stated above) could potentially be interpreted to mean at least two related but conceptually different things. It could refer to the EU as a supranational organisation, meaning primarily its institutions, policies, rules and procedures. But “understanding of the EU” could also be taken to mean its Member States, their cultures, societies, economies, politics etc. This second element is clearly also present in the EP’s text, which makes explicit reference to the EU’s different “media and cultures”.

The documents drafted by the European Commission’s DG INFSO on the potential new programme²² reiterate the objectives listed above, but also spell out or expand on a number of elements that are possibly implicit in the Parliament’s decision. An internal reflection paper mentions a number of aspects that confirm the potential trans-national learning element of the programme, stating that among its objectives would be to:

- Allow journalists to work for a limited time in editorial staffs in other EU countries;
- Allow journalists to discover the political, economic and social situation in other Member States and to write about it;
- Allow journalists and readers to compare the situation across Europe – including the situation with regard to freedom of the press.

²¹ Media pluralism in the Member States of the European Union. SEC(2007) 32. URL:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media_taskforce/doc/pluralism/media_pluralism_swp_en.pdf

²² DG INFSO Reflection paper on “ERASMUS for journalists”; Terms of Reference for the Feasibility study for the pilot project “ERASMUS for journalists”

The Terms of Reference for this study mention another element, namely that of enhancing participants' journalistic skills and knowledge (which is different from their understanding of the EU and/or its Member States) through peer learning and exchange of experience. According to the Terms of Reference, the programme should also:

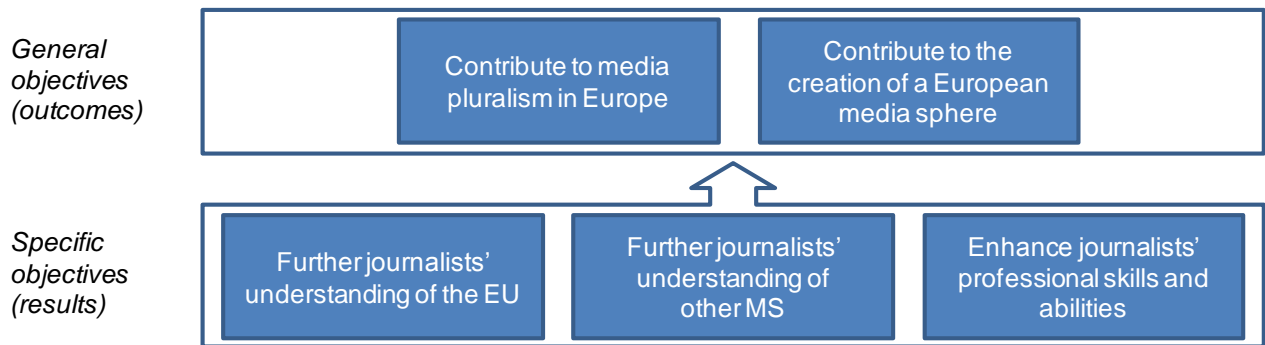
- Foster peer learning of journalism in other Member States of the EU;
- Exchange experience with journalists of other nationalities who face similar obstacles and challenges;
- Facilitate the search for potential partners for European collaboration;
- Provide the possibility to learn how to manage and address various issues of journalism and media pluralism;
- Ensure that journalists improve their abilities in the domain of journalism.

There is one additional objective that is not explicitly stated in any of the above, but emerged as an important objective of the proposed new programme during the study team's conversations with both the European Parliament and the European Commission. This is the objective of fostering the emergence of a “European media sphere”, understood as a sphere where, although the media will almost certainly continue to be primarily national, it increasingly covers and reports on issues that concern more than one country, or even Europe as a whole. A stronger European media sphere would favour the emergence of a genuinely European public sphere, i.e. a situation where citizens increasingly consider and discuss societal issues and problems at the level of the EU (rather than only their respective nation states).

Summing up and synthesising, one can thus identify five conceptually different key objectives of the proposed new “ERASMUS for journalists” programme:

1. Contribute to media pluralism in Europe (i.e. ensure citizens' access to a variety of information sources, opinions, voices etc.)
2. Further journalists' understanding of the EU (i.e. its policies and institutions, and their impact)
3. Further journalists' understanding of other EU Member States (i.e. their cultures, societies, economies, politics and media)
4. Enhance journalists' professional skills and abilities (i.e. their knowledge and command of journalistic tools and techniques, media management, etc.)
5. Contribute to the creation of a European media sphere (i.e. enhance the quantity and quality of coverage of European issues and topics in the media in EU Member States)

The hierarchical order of these objectives appears fairly obvious: While the first and the fifth objectives refer to desired ultimate outcomes, the other three objectives are about intermediate results that should help to achieve these outcomes. Thus, the general and specific objectives of the programme can be depicted as follows:

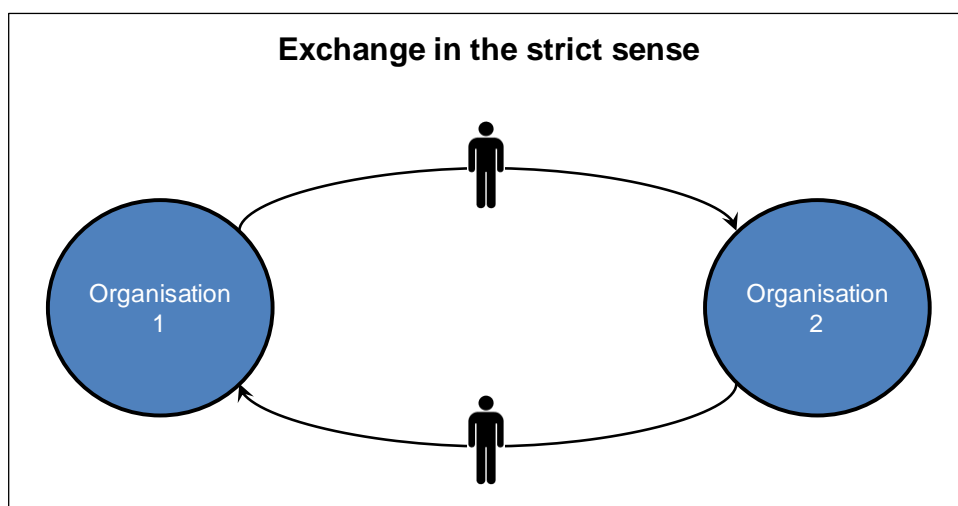


3.2.2 Operational objectives / outputs

The European Parliament’s decision clearly specifies the foreseen outputs: the programme is to finance “exchanges of journalists between different countries and media within the European Union.” However, this text is less clear than it may appear at first, mainly because the term “exchanges” can be used and understood in a number of different ways, which can lead to ambiguities.

The word “exchange” implies an element of reciprocity. In the strictest sense, an exchange is the act of giving something in return for something received. In the educational context, the concept of an exchange student originally implied two students swapping their places at their respective schools or universities for a certain period of time. Such a direct exchange is therefore a mutual and simultaneous trade between two individuals, as illustrated in the diagram below.

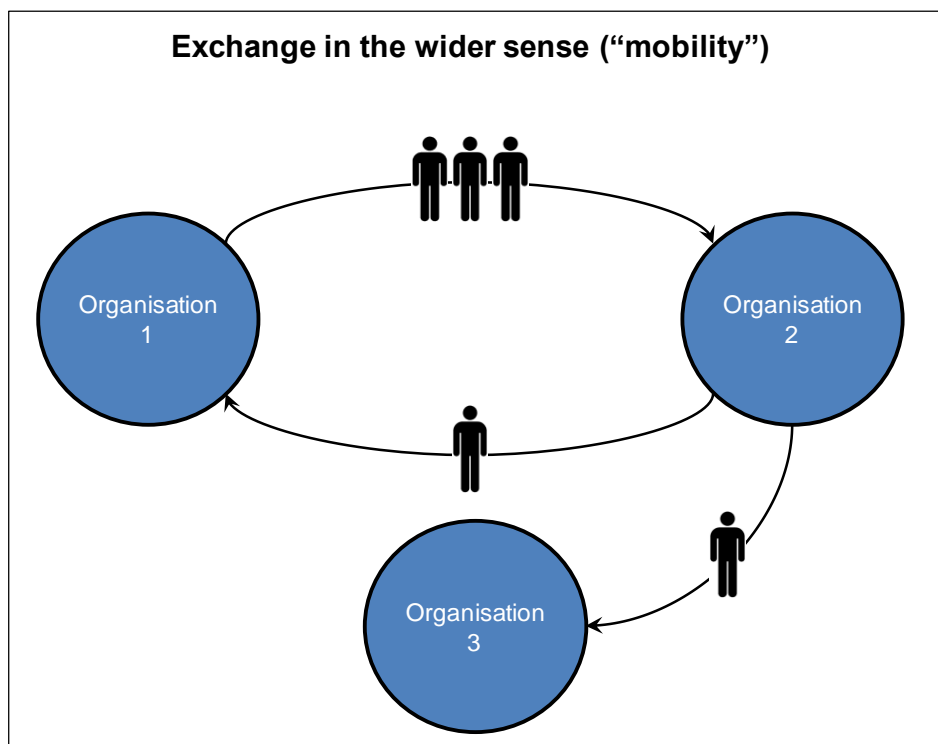
Figure 3: The concept of “exchange”



However, the term “exchange” has come to be used in different ways. Today, most student exchange programmes are programmes in which a student, typically in secondary or higher education, chooses to live in a foreign country to learn, among other things, language and culture. These programmes are called 'exchanges' because originally the goal was an exchange of

students between different countries. However, no trade off is actually required, so a student is allowed to go to another country without finding a counterpart in that country to exchange with. Although participants in the EU’s Erasmus programme are typically referred to as exchange students, the programme is actually primarily a *mobility* (and not an exchange) programme. The concept of mobility is more flexible than a direct exchange: it facilitates individuals moving from one organisation to another, but does not rely on direct reciprocity or simultaneity. Instead, it creates a pool of eligible host organisations. This also means that in a given period of time, an organisation may send out more individuals than it receives, and vice versa. Some organisations may even only send, or only receive, as exemplified in the diagram below.

Figure 4: The concept of “mobility”



Given the prevalence of the “mobility” approach in most pertinent EU programmes (including Erasmus itself), as well as most other similar programmes that were examined for this study, it appears clear that the term “exchange” needs to be interpreted in a broad sense for this feasibility study, and that other mobility-related approaches also have to be considered.

In fact, the expert panel for this study suggested that another promising approach may be a “twinning” model, in which pairs of journalists would be constituted (in a similar way to the strict exchange model discussed previously). However, rather than swap places, one journalist would host the other at his or her organisation, after which the favour would be returned. A further option that could be explored is group (rather than individual) mobility and co-operation between journalists from different Member States. Finally, it is also clear that seminars for journalists in Brussels or other relevant locations (such as those that are already being provided through DG COMM’s framework contract) could also achieve at least some of the objectives envisaged for the ERASMUS for journalists programme. Such seminars could also be combined with some of the other options to add specific value.

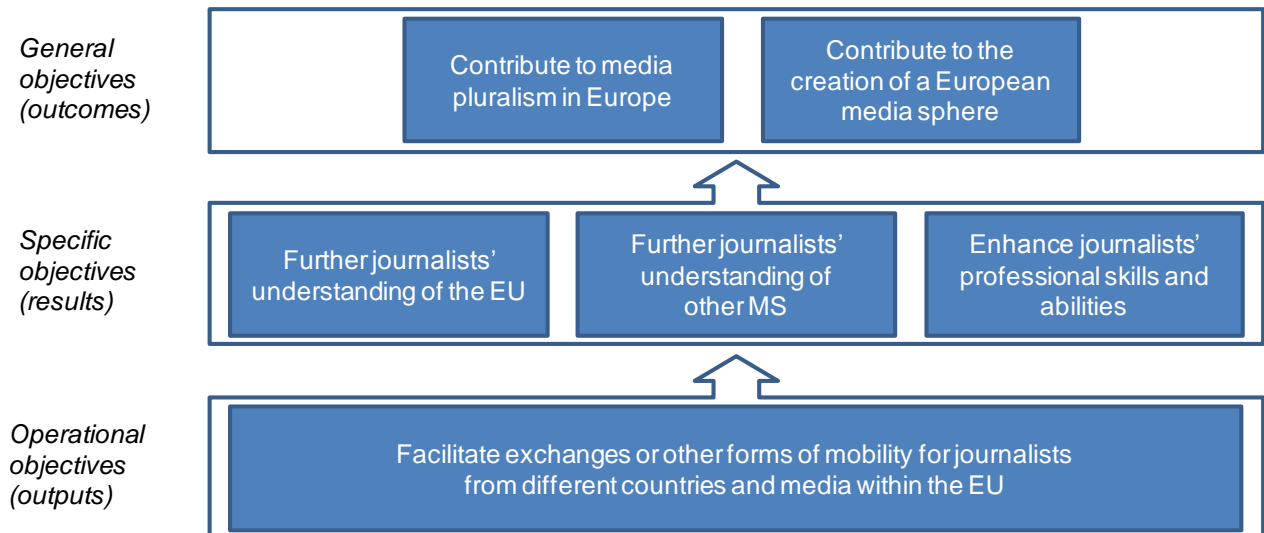
Therefore, during the early stages of this study, the operational objectives / desired outputs of the programme were defined in a relatively flexible and open way. Rather than using the European

Parliament’s wording (“exchanges of journalists between different countries and media”), the operational objective is defined as:

- Facilitate exchanges or other forms of mobility for journalists from different countries and media within the EU

Thus, the full set of objectives is as follows:

Figure 5: General, specific and operational programme objectives



The next stages of this study (fieldwork and ensuing analysis) were dedicated to identifying which form(s) of mobility is best suited to achieving the specific and general objectives defined previously. The table overleaf shows the five “prototypes” that were identified during the initial stage, as well as an initial overview of some potential pros and cons. When considering these “prototypes”, it is important to keep in mind that they are primarily meant to illustrate conceptually different approaches to mobility, but are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, an ERASMUS for journalists programme could potentially be designed in a way that is flexible enough to finance more than one type of mobility (if the fieldwork and ensuing analysis shows that there would be a strong interest from and added value to the target audiences). At the same time, it is important to note that some of the approaches that are outlined in the table already exist (in particular the seminars), or could potentially be implemented through other programmes (such as the proposed Preparatory action for European research grants for cross-border investigative journalism, which is currently being studied by DG Communication). The analysis in the ensuing phases of this feasibility study took into account the need to maximise synergies with existing or potential new initiatives, while avoiding unnecessary duplication or overlaps.

Programme prototype	Brief description	Pros	Cons	Programmes that use a similar approach
1. “Exchange”	In a direct one-on-one exchange, two journalists from different EU Member States and media would swap their work-places for a limited period of time. During the exchange, journalists could potentially file reports both for their host organisation and their home organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for mutual learning • Direct applicability if exchanges take place between similar media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty of findings pairs could limit scope • Visitors may not be productive in an unfamiliar environment 	Projekt ‘Nahaufnahme’
2. “Mobility”	Journalists would be placed with a host organisation (media outlet) in a different Member State, but there is no direct reciprocity, i.e. it is not a necessary pre-condition that a journalist from the host media spends time at the visiting journalists’ organisation, or at any foreign media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several programmes have used this approach successfully • Pooling of opportunities could help achieve critical mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts may be reluctant if there is no direct gain for them • Risk of high demand for placements with high-profile media only 	ERASMUS, Leonardo da Vinci, ERASMUS for young entrepreneurs, Trilateral Journalist Exchange
3. “Twinning”	The programme would facilitate twinning or pairing two journalists from two different news organisations in two different countries. Basically, each member of the pair would in turn spend some time working alongside the other in his or her country. The pairings would be based on a common interest (e.g. in a common story).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on a concrete journalistic output • Clear added value for both partners, who in turn act as hosts and visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty of finding pairs could limit scope • Timing / selection could be problematic – topics need to be researched “now” 	
4. “Co-operation”	The idea is similar to that of “twinning”, but would support groups rather than pairs of journalists. Such a programme could inspire and support editorial projects run by groups of journalists with an interest in covering topics relevant for several EU MS. Each member would investigate the situation in their own country, and share the results of their research within the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effectiveness (no need for journalists to spend much time abroad) • Provides comparative perspective across several EU MS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely heavy reliance on intermediary organisations • Possible reluctance to participate in projects on pre-determined topics 	
5. “Seminars”	Seminars or workshops held in Brussels or other relevant European locations could bring together journalists from across different EU Member States to learn about specific topics, visit relevant locations or institutions, and meet interesting interlocutors. Such seminars could be combined with any of the other models to enhance the value-added.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good vehicle for conveying concrete content • Potential synergies if combined with other approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited potential for peer learning • Likely focus on EU affairs, but not national media and cultures 	EJC seminars for the EC, International Journalism Exchange, Trilateral Journalist Exchange (combine seminars with placements)

3.2.3 Activities and inputs

In order to facilitate exchanges or other forms of mobility, the European Commission would have to engage in a number of activities, either directly or through an intermediary organisation. Based on the experience of similar programmes, one can identify the following broad types of activities that will almost certainly be necessary:

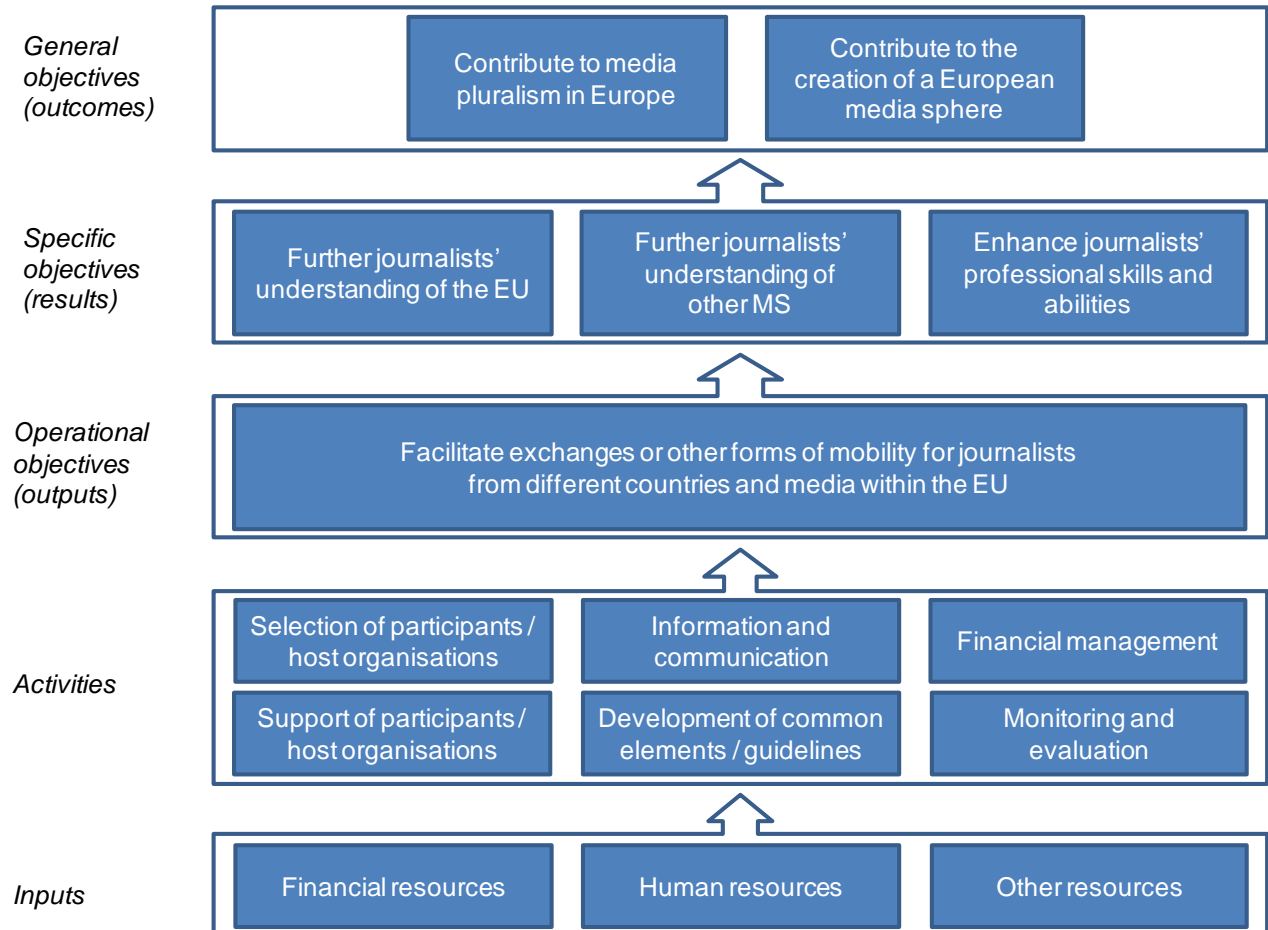
- Selection of participants / host organisations: Journalists to participate in the programme will have to be recruited, selected and matched with relevant host organisations. This might involve defining appropriate selection criteria, running a competitive application process, reviewing applications and selecting the most qualified journalists. Depending on the type of programme, host organisation might also have to be identified / recruited / selected.
- Support of participants / host organisations: Depending on the type of exchanges / mobility, there may be a need to provide regular or ad hoc assistance to participants and/or host organisations, such as answering their queries, but also supporting them in finding accommodation, suitable working facilities, contacts, etc.
- Information and communication: A key element of any such programme will be the dissemination of information to potential and actual participants and host organisations, so as to raise awareness of the programme and encourage participation. Information to a wider target audience may also be envisaged to communicate the results of the programme.
- Development of common elements / guidelines: Depending on the nature of the programme, this could include the development of handbooks for participants or hosting organisations, a programme syllabus and/or schedule, the definition of specific topics to focus on, etc.
- Financial management: This could include disbursing financial resources in the form of grants or other mechanisms, monitoring spending levels, reviewing evidence that is submitted, auditing accounts, etc.
- Monitoring and evaluation: In order to ensure transparency and accountability, and to understand the effectiveness, efficiency, impact etc., processes and tools should be put in place to evaluate the programme, inter alia by collecting and analysing regular feedback from participants.

The above is only an indicative list of broad types of activities. The exact activities, and the inputs required (in terms of financial, human and possibly other resources), were analysed after the nature and scope of the programme had become clearer (see section 5).

3.3 Uncertainties, constraints and critical conditions

The diagram below depicts the programme’s complete intervention logic, reflecting the elements outlined in the previous sections. It shows the general and specific objectives the ERASMUS for journalists programme is intended to achieve, the expected outputs, the key programme activities required to produce these outputs, and the kinds of input needed. The remainder of this section takes a critical look at these elements and their inter-linkages, in order to identify any significant uncertainties, risks and constraints, and based on this, the conditions that will be critical to the programme’s success. The analysis draws on the insights and views of the expert panel as well

as the relevant experiences gained through the examination of similar programmes (see also the fiches in annex A1). It results in a series of working hypotheses, which were subsequently tested with the programme’s target audiences during the fieldwork (see section 4).



3.3.1 General objectives

Beginning at the level of the general objectives (or desired ultimate outcomes), there was consensus among the expert panel that an ERASMUS for journalists programme has the potential to contribute to both general objectives. All three specific objectives are relevant to the general objectives. An enhanced understanding of journalists of the EU (in the more institutional sense) and/or of its Member States is likely to have a positive effect on both the quantity and the quality of coverage of European issues in the national media, thereby contributing to the emergence of a European media sphere. Enhanced journalistic skills and abilities would also be likely to positively affect the quality (albeit not necessarily the quantity) of reporting on European issues, and thus also contribute to this objective.

There is also a link between the specific objectives and the second general objective (media pluralism), but this is somewhat weaker and more indirect. To some extent, media pluralism (in the sense of giving citizens access to a variety of opinions, voices etc.) could be a by-product of the enhanced coverage of European issues just mentioned, to the extent that citizens receive

more information about issues they are currently less frequently exposed to. In addition, it appears likely that the exposure of journalists to different ideas, media cultures, editorial practices or styles of reporting (e.g. as concerns the extent to which media is critical of government) during their stays abroad would potentially lead them to adopt different points of view upon their return, and to become more aware of the situation regarding media pluralism in their own countries (be it more or less positive than in the country they visited). However, it is important to note that journalists would still have to comply with the editorial standards and practices of their employers, and therefore not all new experiences they have gained will necessarily feed through to their journalistic work.

In summary, both general objectives are inter-related and the programme, if implemented effectively, is likely to contribute to both. The extent of this contribution is primarily a function of the scale of the programme (i.e. the number of journalists who benefit from the mobility scheme). But it is important to bear in mind that some of the linkages are indirect, and the desired outcomes are likely to manifest themselves over the longer term only. It seems likely that an ERASMUS for journalists programme would have a more significant impact towards the general objective of contributing to the creation of a European media sphere; this should therefore be seen as the main long-term measure of success for the programme. The contribution to media pluralism in Europe appears less certain and more indirect, particularly since the programme would not tackle one of the key dimensions of media pluralism, namely the issue of media ownership. Nonetheless, some effect on media pluralism seems likely, mainly via the exposure of journalists (and by extension of their audiences) to different ideas, opinions, journalistic practices, media cultures, etc.

3.3.2 Specific objectives

The programme’s three specific objectives (or desired intermediate results) as defined previously are clearly complementary to each other. However, they are also conceptually and practically different from one another, and the extent to which each specific objective will be achieved depends on how the programme is designed and implemented. It is entirely possible for an ERASMUS for journalists programme to be set up in such a way that it will only achieve one specific objective, but not the others. For example, a mobility programme that allows journalists to work for a period of time at a media outlet in a different Member State could be expected to have a large effect on their understanding of the host country’s culture, media etc., but the effect on their understanding of EU institutions and policies might be negligible. A seminar in Brussels could have quite the opposite effect. It is therefore important to weight the different specific objectives, and to use these priorities to inform the design of the programme.

It is also crucial that the programme’s specific objectives cater to an already existing need or interest among the target audience. It would be potentially wasteful to expect the programme to generate demand where none exists; rather, its offering should be aligned with at least one need that journalists have and that is currently not being sufficiently addressed by existing initiatives, programmes or mechanisms. In the view of the expert panel, the extent to which the different specific objectives defined above correspond with the needs of the target audience varies:

- From the perspective of journalists at the beginning of their professional careers (i.e. with between two and five years of experience), enhancing their professional skills and abilities would likely be the most important objective. It would be seen as most beneficial to their professional development and career opportunities.

- Slightly more experienced journalists (i.e. with between five and ten years of experience) would also be interested in developing their professional skills and abilities, but possibly to a lesser extent than their younger colleagues. This category of journalists is most likely to feel frustrated by the lack of opportunities to travel and the routine nature of their job, and would therefore be likely to value the exposure to different countries, cultures and media very highly (as well as the opportunity to further their professional networks).
- According to the expert panel, most journalists do not perceive furthering their understanding of the EU, its institutions and policies as an acute need. Instead, many tend to feel that the reason for the relative lack of news related to the EU is that these issues are not of interest to their audiences. Although the experience with the seminars for journalists in Brussels and elsewhere organised by the EJC shows that there is a certain level of demand for learning about the EU, this is unlikely to be a key motivating factor for participation in an ERASMUS for journalists programme.

In light of the above, it seems important to note that in order to generate sufficient interest among the target audience, the ERASMUS for journalists programme should not concentrate exclusively on enhancing journalists’ understanding of the EU, its policies and institutions. This is already addressed by the seminars in Brussels, and is unlikely to generate sufficient interest in a new programme on its own. Instead, the new programme needs to address at least one need of journalists that is currently not sufficiently catered to. Given the manifold opportunities that already exist for training to enhance technical skills and abilities, it seems that the most appropriate “unique selling point” of the programme would be the exposure of participants to Europe – not primarily in the form of the EU institutions, but in the form of other Member States, their media, cultures, politics, economies, societies etc.

It is therefore proposed to treat “further journalists’ understanding of other Member States” as the programme’s indispensable desired result. It is also the specific objective that is most likely to make a significant contribution towards the programme’s general objectives as defined previously. This is not to say that the other specific objectives should be deleted or neglected; both continue to be relevant and were investigated during the remainder of this study. However, the working hypothesis derived from the analysis of the programme’s intervention logic (and subsequently tested with the programme’s target audience – see section 4) is that “further journalists’ understanding of the EU” and “enhance journalists’ professional skills and abilities” should be treated as ‘secondary’ objectives. In some form of a mobility programme for journalists, these are desirable results, but mainly insofar as they are a consequence of the ‘primary’ specific objective (“furthering journalists’ understanding of other Member States”) – including their exposure to aspects such as the effects of European policies ‘on the ground’, different approaches to common European challenges, different media environments, ways of working, etc. If these ‘secondary’ objectives are seen as ‘primary’ objectives instead, there are likely to be more effective and efficient ways of achieving them than a mobility programme (e.g. through seminars in Brussels or through dedicated training courses).

3.3.3 Operational objectives, outputs and activities

Having clarified, analysed and tested the programme’s key objectives and their inter-linkages, the remainder of this section undertakes a preliminary examination of the most significant uncertainties, risk and constraints that might limit the ERASMUS for journalists programme’s ability to effectively produce the outputs (i.e. exchanges or other forms of mobility) required to achieve the objectives. Again, the analysis is based on the experiences of similar programmes

and on expert input; it should be seen as a series of initial hypotheses, which were tested further during the fieldwork that took place in the ensuing stage of this study.

The single most significant uncertainty is the level of interest from the target audiences – including both journalists and potential host organisations (i.e. media outlets).

Beginning with journalists themselves, the expert panel is convinced that there is strong interest *in principle* to participate in an ERASMUS for journalists programme, and the relative success of similar programmes in Europe and elsewhere would seem to corroborate this. Especially at a time of severe budgetary limitations, any initiative that funds international travel will be intrinsically interesting for journalists. However, there are a number of factors that could act as constraints:

- Most importantly, the economic difficulties facing most media (and the resulting decreasing staffing levels) limit their ability and willingness to let staff leave their posts for an extended period of time. At the same time, journalists themselves might feel they cannot afford to be gone from their desks for something that might be perceived as a study visit, for fear of the consequences for their media organisation but also for themselves, as their employers might find during their absence that they actually are not indispensable.
- The expert panel also feels that the prospect of spending time at a media outlet in a different European country itself might not be a strong enough incentive for many journalists to participate. It was noted that 20 years ago, the possibility of experiencing the workings of any modern media organisation in Western Europe or the U.S. was very appealing especially to journalists from ex-Communist countries. However, some experts expressed the view that nowadays the differences between European media and cultures are not so enormous that they are necessarily interesting per se.
- As a result, the interest from journalists could well be concentrated on a few well-known and prestigious publications or broadcasters that are seen as state-of-the-art. However, experience from similar programmes in the U.S. shows that the largest and most prestigious media are not always the best host organisations, as visitors can easily feel lost. At the same time, the lessons learned tend to be more applicable, and therefore the impact greater, if the host organisation is similar to the journalist’s home organisation in terms of size, scope, general outlook etc.

These potential constraints to the level of interest from journalists point to the same key success factor for the programme: in order to maximise interest, the exchanges or other forms of mobility should ideally be linked to a concrete journalistic interest or project. For example, a stay at a foreign media outlet other than the likes of the *BBC*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or *Le Monde* is likely to be more interesting and productive, and also easier to justify to an employer, if it is undertaken to research and ultimately report on a topic that is of interest to the home organisation, or to learn about a concrete topic, journalistic technique, or other skill that will ultimately be applicable during the journalist’s day-to-day work after his or her return.

Summing up, it seems clear that journalists will be interested in an ERASMUS for journalists programme, even if the extent to which this general interest can prevail against the economic and other constraints depends on if and how these constraints are addressed. However, the level of interest from potential host organisations appears somewhat more doubtful. In the view of the expert panel, the following factors are likely to limit media outlets’ willingness to host a visiting journalist from a different EU Member State:

- It seems unclear whether most media outlets will see much added value in hosting a foreign journalist for a few weeks or months. Simply having an ‘extra pair of hands on

deck’ is probably not enough to make the experience worthwhile for the hosts, in particular given that it takes time to get used to a different working environment, editorial style and media culture, and therefore visitors are unlikely to be very productive during their stay (particularly if it is relatively short).

- Providing a work space and access to facilities would normally not be a problem, but potential host organisations might be worried about having to allocate one of their staff to provide guidance and orientation to the visitor – or, to put it very drastically, to ‘babysit’ him or her. The willingness to make this investment is likely to be limited in the current economic climate, especially for smaller media outlets.
- In terms of a potential return on the hosting organisations’ investment, it is uncertain to what extent the possibility for the host’s own staff to also spend time abroad (either at the media outlet of the visitor or at some other media outlet, depending on the programme implementation model that is eventually chosen) would be a sufficient incentive. The expert panel had serious doubts in this regard, in particular given the likely reluctance of many to let their own staff leave their posts (see above). A token sum of money to compensate hosts for the expenses they incur would also be unlikely to make much of a difference. On the other hand, a larger payment might incentivise media outlets to host journalists for the wrong reasons, and treat them less well than should be expected.

However, the scepticism expressed in the above is contradicted to some extent by the proven ability of several existing programmes to find host organisations (albeit on a relatively small scale), sometimes even when there is no possibility for those organisations to send one of their staff abroad in return. For example, during the last 25 years the International Journalism Exchange programme has managed to place 240 journalists from developing countries at U.S. newspapers for a period of two weeks. The host organisations are recruited directly by the institute that runs the programme, which uses its wide network to try to find newspapers that are similar to those the participating journalists work for in their home countries. According to the project manager, many U.S. newspapers are quite willing to make the investment of hosting a foreign journalist in return for gaining insights into their countries and cultures. However, it tends to be much easier to find placements for journalists from countries that already generate interest from U.S. readers (such as Afghanistan); although irrespectively of the journalist’s origin, the recent economic difficulties of the sector have made it harder to recruit hosts. Similarly, the Trilateral Journalist Exchange programme, which ran during the 1990s and involved Canada, Mexico and the U.S., reportedly found it relatively easy to find placements for up to 12 journalists per year in all three countries, partly as a result of the interest generated by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into force in 1994.

This leads back to the issue of journalistic interest. Among both journalists and hosting organisations, the level of interest in participating in an ERASMUS for journalists programme is likely to be much higher if there is a concrete journalistic interest to be catered to or project to be implemented. For example, a UK media outlet may see little value in hosting a journalist from, say, Slovenia. However, in view of the large numbers of Polish immigrants that have come to Britain since Poland’s accession to the EU in 2004, it may well be interested in hosting a Polish journalist to enrich its reporting on the issue of immigration, its causes and consequences. Similarly, some media outlets may be particularly interested in hosting a journalist from a country where they do not yet have a sufficient network of contacts. In general terms, it seems clear that the willingness of media outlets to host journalists from other European countries cannot be taken for granted, and ways will have to be found to ensure that any potential new programme offers them sufficient value to merit their participation. The idea of a “twinning” approach is one possible response to this challenge; this and other ways in which the programme could be made interesting for host organisations were investigated further over the course of this study.

In addition to the uncertainties and constraints concerning the readiness of the target audiences to participate in a programme, the following other key risks related to the programme and its outputs have been identified:

- **Language:** There are few professions in which a perfect command of the language is as important as in journalism. In all similar programmes for journalists that were examined, the proficiency of the participants in the language of their host country was one of the key determinants of success, and in several instances language problems were reportedly the cause of problems with individual participants. As a result, one programme decided to test candidates’ spoken English over the telephone as part of the selection process. In the case of an EU programme, the number of languages that would potentially be involved is even higher, and ideally, the programme should also accommodate small language – small language combinations. However, in some possible approaches that include a group element or seminar, one would have to rely on one (or a few) ‘lingua franca’ that all participants would have to be proficient in.
- **Definition of journalists:** As noted previously, the professional situation of journalists is changing, and the boundaries of who is or is not a journalist can often be fuzzy. Ideally, the growing number of free-lance journalists should also be able to participate in the programme, but depending on the implementation mode, this could raise a number of practical issues. In particular, reciprocity (i.e. the idea that an organisation that hosts a journalist also gets the opportunity to send someone to a different media outlet – whether simultaneously or at a later stage) might not work if the programme were opened to free-lancers. Another issue that will have to be clarified is whether or not the programme should be open to bloggers. The growing importance of blogging is clear, but again, how this could fit into an ERASMUS for journalists programme will need to be further investigated.
- **Critical mass:** All of the mobility programmes for journalists that were examined were quite limited in size (between 6 and 20 journalists per year), making it relatively easy to recruit a sufficient number of participants and especially hosts based on existing networks and contacts. If the proposed programme is to have a significant impact, it should ideally facilitate a much larger number of “mobilities”, and achieve a critical mass of participants. This would require different approaches, especially to recruiting host organisations. Also, some possible implementation modes (such as the “direct exchange” or “twinning” models) rely not on a large pool, but on individual pairs of journalists and/or media outlets to find each other. Rolling out such an approach on a larger scale could be particularly challenging, and will have to rely on taking advantage of synergies with existing or newly created fora that bring together journalists from different European countries.
- **Red tape:** European programmes have a reputation for being overly bureaucratic and complicated as regards the application procedures etc. This could potentially be a factor that keeps potential participants from applying, particularly since (unlike for example academic institutions) journalists tend to shy away from investing significant time in bureaucratic processes. To prevent this from happening, the rules and procedures should be as light-touch as possible.
- **Potential for ‘bad press’:** Given that the programme is aimed at journalists, there is an obvious risk that any perceived or real shortcomings or inefficiencies would be widely publicised. This could extend to the rules and procedures (see above), but also to the programme objectives (in particular if it is perceived as attempted propaganda, i.e. to disseminate positive stories about the EU) or its implementation (“EU pays for tourism”). At the same time, there is a real risk that journalists who participate in the programme then

write negative articles not about the programme itself, but more generally about the policies or institutions of the EU or of other Member States. If one takes respect for the freedom of the press seriously, it seems difficult to eliminate this risk.

The above should not be taken as a comprehensive list of all possible risks and uncertainties (for a final risk register that takes into account the results of the fieldwork, see section 5.5), but based on the analysis that was carried out in the initial stage, they seem to encapsulate the most important aspects. Summarising, one can list the following critical conditions for the realisation of the programme’s objectives:

1. Clarity as to the objectives that are afforded top priority: Different possible approaches / models of mobility are more or less likely to achieve different objectives.
2. Addressing existing needs of journalists: Learning about EU institutions and policies alone is unlikely to be a sufficient incentive for most potential participants.
3. Generating interest from journalists: This could be achieved by linking mobility with a specific journalistic interest or project.
4. Generating interest from host organisations: Again, the existence of a concrete journalistic added value is key.
5. Language: A high level of proficiency in the language of the host country seems indispensable to making the experience worthwhile for both sides.
6. Definition of a journalist: The eligibility criteria for participants need to be in line with the nature of the programme.
7. Critical mass: The process for recruiting and matching participants needs to reflect the nature of the programme and the desired scale.
8. Red tape: Excessively bureaucratic rules and procedures can deter journalists from applying.
9. Potential for ‘bad press’: The programme needs to be able to come to terms with the possibility that it might generate negative news about Europe.

3.4 Preliminary conclusions

The different elements discussed previously can be expressed in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and depicted in a SWOT diagram (see below). This is meant to provide an overview of key factors that are helpful or harmful to achieving the programme’s objectives, and thus help to formulate appropriate responses or strategies. It is important to emphasise that the SWOTs shown below only reflect an initial assessment of *potential* rather than *real* strengths and weaknesses. It is meant to contribute to the analysis and definition of the attributes, nature and scope of the proposed ERASMUS for journalists programme, and was used as a reference framework during the later stages of the study.

Figure 6: Preliminary programme SWOTS

	HELPFUL To achieving the objective	HARMFUL To achieving the objective
INTERNAL (attributes of the programme)	<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Programme objectives are all achievable, can be mutually reinforcing</p> <p>Initiatives to fund international travel address a clear need of journalists</p> <p>Potential to link mobility proposition with a concrete journalistic project / interest</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Programme priorities not sufficiently clear; different approaches could achieve the different objectives to a varying extent</p> <p>Unclear value proposition for host organisations</p> <p>Success dependent on participants having a high level of language proficiency</p> <p>No agreed definition of journalists; pragmatic eligibility criteria might exclude a part of the target audience</p> <p>Achieving critical mass is a challenge, particularly in approaches that depend on pairing journalists</p>
EXTERNAL (attributes of the environment)	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Current gap in the market – no EU-wide mobility initiatives for journalists</p> <p>Similar existing (small scale) programmes show the potential of mobility initiatives for journalists to make an impact</p> <p>Potential synergies with EJC and other seminars / briefings for EU journalists</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Economic difficulties of media limit the time journalists and their employers can dedicate to study visits / training</p> <p>Excessive bureaucracy could deter participants</p> <p>Risk that the programme could generate ‘bad press’</p>

Based on the analysis carried out during phase 1 of the study (including the review of similar programmes, the views and opinions of the expert panel assembled for this study, the development and testing of the intervention logic, and the identification of preliminary SWOTs), the study team concludes that an ERASMUS for journalists programme does appear feasible, and could potentially contribute to achieving all of the objectives that have been set. However, the extent of this contribution is likely to vary depending on the objective in question: the potential of a mobility programme for journalists to have a significant impact on advancing a European media sphere appears much greater than its potential to enhance media pluralism, particularly since the programme would not tackle one of the key dimensions of media pluralism, namely the issue of media ownership.

In order to achieve (some or all of) its objectives, the programme will have to address and overcome a significant number of serious potential weaknesses and threats. The most critical factor for the programme’s success is likely to be its specific value proposition, i.e. its ability to generate sufficient interest from both journalists and media outlets. In the expert panel’s view, the journalistic interest of the mobility is the key variable in this. Put simply, if the programme helps participants get an interesting story that can be turned into a concrete journalistic output (e.g. article), or helps them acquire a specific skill and/or further their professional networks in a way that will add value to their regular journalistic activity, the buy-in from both journalists and their editors will be much higher.

The study has identified a number of possible alternative basic approaches the programme could adopt; these were further explored, analysed and tested with the target audiences during the ensuing stages of this study (see section 4). It seems clear that different approaches would address the different challenges and therefore achieve the programme’s different objectives to a varying extent. The analysis of the intervention logic suggested the following weighting of objectives:

- General objectives:
 - The programme’s main desired ultimate outcome is to contribute to the creation of a European media sphere (i.e. enhanced coverage of trans-national and European affairs in the national media).
 - By doing so, the programme should also contribute to media pluralism in the EU (i.e. provide citizens with access to a variety of opinions, voices etc.).
- Specific objectives:
 - The programme’s main desired intermediate result is to further journalists’ understanding of other Member States, their media and cultures.
 - In addition, to the extent possible the programme should also further journalists’ understanding of the EU (in the more institutional sense), and enhance their journalistic skills and abilities (through peer learning).

4.0 RESULTS OF THE FIELDWORK

This section summarises the main results of the fieldwork that was undertaken to engage potential programme beneficiaries, namely journalists themselves (section 4.1) and their editors, who will play a key role in deciding whether media outlets will be willing to participate in the programme by hosting foreign journalists and/or allowing their own staff to invest time in the programme (section 4.2). The fieldwork was structured so as to gauge the target audiences' level of interest in the programme, and to discuss, validate, refute, qualify or add to the preliminary conclusions and hypotheses outlined in section 3 of this report. In addition, this section also briefly discusses the results of a workshop with stakeholders that took place after the fieldwork had been finalised in order to gather further input and feedback on the preliminary results of the study (section 4.3).

4.1 Focus groups with journalists

4.1.1 Introduction

4.1.1.1 The focus group methodology

Focus groups are structured and moderated discussions among a small group of individuals representing a particular target group, whose opinions and perceptions are of interest in a specific context. They are a key element of the methodology for this study, as they provide detailed qualitative evidence of the target audience's (i.e. journalists') views.

The primary, qualitative research carried out within focus groups allows the study team to understand the real needs and expectations of the target group. It also helps the team to get to the bottom of why certain opinions exist, shed light on the participants' true motivations, and expose certain myths or misconceptions. The open discussions facilitated in the groups generate valuable direct insights into the diverse range of circumstances of members of the target group, which feed into the development of the final programme.

A total of 17 focus groups were held between June and September 2010 with journalists in eight different EU Member States (MS). The key results are summarised below. For the full reports on the focus groups in each MS, as well as the focus group discussion guide and the presentation that contains an overview of the issues, objectives and scenarios that were discussed, please see annex A2.

4.1.1.2 Selection criteria

To select a representative sample of countries for the focus groups, the study team has taken several factors into account. This included a mix of northern, southern, western and central / eastern European countries, as well as large and small MS. The following Member States were selected for this task in collaboration with the European Commission in the inception phase of this study:

Table 1: Member States in which focus groups were held

Member State	Language in which focus groups were held
Belgium	One in French / one in English
Estonia	English
Denmark	English
Germany	German
Poland	Polish
Romania	Romanian
Spain	Spanish
UK	English

In addition, the study team decided to carry out an additional focus group, in English, with international journalists based in Brussels to compare the views and opinions resulting from a discussion among journalists from a broad range of cultural backgrounds with the findings from the national groups.

4.1.1.3 Representation

In order to recruit suitable participants, the study team was able to use the extensive network of the European Journalism Centre (EJC) of national and local journalists. In addition, media associations and universities were contacted in several countries for further details of potential participants to the groups.

Each focus group consisted of up to 13 participants from a broad range of backgrounds, resulting in a total number of 120 participants. To ensure diversity and coverage of different profiles, participants were selected to achieve a good representation of different age groups and levels of experience²³. In addition, the study team ensured an appropriate balance between male and female participants, permanent²⁴ and freelance journalists, and journalists that work for different types of media (print / TV / radio / web²⁵). Please refer to the table below for details on the representation of the criteria mentioned above.

²³ The study team divided journalists into three segments based on years of experience. Journalists with less than five years experience are classified as ‘early career’; those with between five and 20 years experience are classified as ‘mid-career’; and those with over twenty years experience are classified as ‘advanced’.

²⁴ Two retired, previously permanent journalists were counted as “permanent”.

²⁵ Several participants stated to work in more than one media type. The total number of listed media types is therefore higher than the number of focus group participants.

Table 2: Focus group participants by category

Countries	Perma- -nent	Free- -lance	Print	TV	Radio	Web	Early career ²⁶	Mid career ²⁷	Advan- -ced career ²⁸
Belgium	6	3	7	1	1	1	5	4	-
Denmark	5	6	8	-	4	1	2	6	3
Estonia	14	2	16	-	-	-	2	12	2
EU correspondents	3	5	6	2	-	1	1	7	-
Germany	3	14	6	9	4	6	8	7	2
Poland	8	8	9	1	3	3	9	7	-
Romania	17	3	8	6	6	2	11	6	3
Spain	10	5	4	4	2	4	1	14	-
UK	3	5	6	1	1	1	3	4	1
Total	69	51	70	24	21	19	42	67	11

4.1.2 Objectives

4.1.2.1 Prioritisation of objectives

At the outset of the study, three separate specific objectives of an ERASMUS for journalists programme were identified, namely:

1. Further journalists’ understanding of the EU (i.e. its policies and institutions, and their impact)
2. Further journalists’ understanding of other EU Member States (i.e. their cultures, societies, economies, politics and media)
3. Enhance journalists’ professional skills and abilities (i.e. their knowledge and command of journalistic tools and techniques, media management, etc.)

During the focus groups, participants were asked how relevant each of these objectives are considering their respective needs and interests, and how interesting a programme that pursued some or all of these objectives would be for them. It emerged that all objectives were considered to be valid by the vast majority of focus group participants, but in terms of their prioritisation it became apparent that all of the 17 groups suggested a prioritisation of objectives 2 (further journalists’ understanding of other MS) and 3 (enhance journalists’ professional skills and abilities) over objective 1 (further journalists’ knowledge of the EU). Furthermore, the majority of members

²⁶ Less than five years experience

²⁷ Between five and 20 years experience

²⁸ Over 20 years experience

of almost all of the groups perceived objectives 2 and 3 to be strongly linked with each other: a better understanding of other Member States and their media was understood to be an enhancement of one's professional journalistic skills and abilities. In particular, participants felt that the opportunity for knowledge sharing and mutual learning with other journalists in a stimulating new environment, as a result of a programme aiming to achieve objective 2, would contribute to objective 3 in an effective way.

The focus group discussions around the feasibility of the objectives confirmed that objective 2 was also seen to be the most feasible objective in terms of what an Erasmus programme for journalists could achieve, as it corresponds directly with what was understood as the core element of the programme, i.e. working in a media organisation abroad, which would inevitably increase the participants' understanding of the country they visit.

When participants were asked if it would make sense for the programme to focus primarily on objective 3 (with a view to a more tangible enhancement of the technical skills required of journalists, such as writing reports, conducting interviews, editing film or radio material etc), the prevailing view was that in order to enhance these skills and abilities it is not strictly necessary to be placed in a completely new context within a media organisation in a foreign country. It was suggested training courses running alongside of the journalists' work at home would be more effective if an improvement of purely technical skills were the main objective.

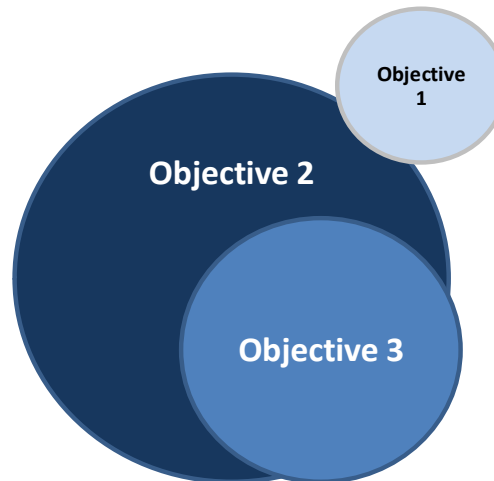
Although some journalists from a minority of groups (e.g. Denmark, Poland) questioned the level of benefit derived from mutual learning and knowledge sharing with countries that are less advanced in the field of journalism, the vast majority of participants of all groups expected the programme to be beneficial regardless of the countries visited. It was suggested that even countries with an apparently lower technical standard or a less elaborate journalistic tradition would provide a valuable experience for visiting journalists, and the principle of “broadening one's horizon” in itself seemed to justify the effort of taking part in the programme for many participants, again supporting the impression that objective 2 (and the aim to learn from new “colleagues” and their surroundings) best reflects the needs and expectations of the target group.

Objective 1 was not dismissed as undesirable, but seen as much less interesting and relevant than the other two objectives by nearly all focus group participants. The feasibility of achieving this objective through the proposed programme was also questioned across all groups: journalists tended to assume that an Erasmus-like programme would facilitate exchanges / mobility between Member States, and therefore allow them to gain insight into a particular Member State as well as an individual media organisation, but would not necessarily expose them to EU-related topics. In addition, the prevailing view was that sufficient information about the EU is already provided and readily accessible through the internet and other provisions such as EU-sponsored seminars and workshops. Nevertheless, knowledge of the EU was seen to be an important tool for EU-based journalists (and therefore contribute to objective 3), and the majority of participants agreed that this would also be an outcome that could possibly be achieved through a programme relating to objective 2 as its main objective (e.g. by adding EU-related seminars to the programme).

Summing up, the majority of focus group participants thought that learning about another Member State and the functioning of a concrete media outlet within it (objective 2) would be the most desirable and relevant outcome of an ERASMUS programme for journalists. This would almost inevitably entail furthering their journalistic skills (objective 3) as a result of the observation of different approaches and techniques, peer learning, exchange of experience and enhanced professional networks, and therefore benefit their career development. However, if skills development were the main objective of the programme, then there could be other, more cost-effective ways of achieving this that wouldn't entail going abroad. Learning about the EU (objective 1) was seen as important to some extent, although many journalists admitted this kind of information is of limited relevance to them during their day-to-day work. Indirectly, a better

knowledge of EU policies and institutions could be a side effect of an exchange / mobility programme, but if this were the main objective, then it could probably best be achieved by visits to Brussels or other seats of EU institutions. The diagram below depicts this prioritisation of objectives from the point of view of journalists.

Figure 7: Programme objectives as perceived by focus group participants



4.1.2.2 Level of interest

Overall there was a very high level of interest in an Erasmus programme for journalists amongst the focus group participants. The vast majority stated that they would be open to take part in a programme aiming to achieve all of the objectives discussed above, but in particular to gain first-hand experience of how a media outlet functions and how journalists work in another Member State (and thus improve their professional skills through peer learning), and more generally, to learn about the culture, society, politics, economics etc. of another Member State.

The main benefits expected from taking part revolved around gaining insight into a different (working) environment, and participants repeatedly mentioned the importance of broadening one's horizon by observing how journalists work elsewhere. Networking was named as another core benefit of the programme, and the majority of journalists across all groups underlined the importance of creating networking opportunities, especially with journalists working abroad.

Again, the benefits expected from the programme correspond closely to objective 2: furthering one's knowledge of another Member State by working in a media organisation abroad would both serve to broaden one's horizon and present an effective opportunity for networking and establishing solid working contacts abroad.

“You need a network with journalists from other MS and know how their press and politics function”.

4.1.3 Approaches

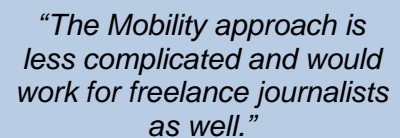
The following section presents the aggregated views of the focus group members on the different approaches regarding the structure of the programme, which were introduced as individual scenarios to the participants.

4.1.3.1 Mobility

A basic mobility approach²⁹, where host organisations would accommodate individual visiting journalists without necessarily sending a member of their staff abroad in return (similar to the approach of the Erasmus programme for students), was viewed positively in principle by the majority of participants across all groups. Participants found that the approach’s flexible structure and less complicated administration (in comparison to a programme where two partners would have to be matched for an exchange; see below) particularly attractive.

Participants in all groups also liked the openness of the approach to freelance journalists, who could participate in the programme without having to provide a place of work for an exchange partner in return. This was seen as particularly important, as many journalists work in freelance arrangements during some stages of their career and might effectively be excluded from a programme that is based around a fixed, reciprocal exchange of journalists between media organisations.

However, the lack of reciprocity was also seen as a potential weakness of the approach: putting structures for an effective integration of the visiting journalists in place was expected to be a major challenge, and there was concern that the shortage of resources experienced by many media organisations today could make it impossible for host organisations to dedicate a member of staff to manage and integrate the visiting journalist (also see section 4.1.5.2 on *Integration*).



“The Mobility approach is less complicated and would work for freelance journalists as well.”

Although several participants in a number of groups were in favour of a programme lasting several months, in order to make this approach workable for different groups of journalists with a wide range of working arrangements most agreed that the duration of the programme should be kept as flexible as possible (also see section 4.1.4 on *Duration*).

4.1.3.2 Reciprocal approaches: Exchange and Twinning

Two of the suggested programme approaches were based on the idea of reciprocal visits: Twinning³⁰, a staged exchange of two journalists who would visit each other to work together on a

²⁹ In the Mobility scenario individual participants are placed with a host organisation of any media type in another Member State for a duration of 2-3 months, working primarily for their host organisation and filing reports for their home organisation only to a limited extent. The scenario does not envisage any necessary reciprocation of the visits between organisations.

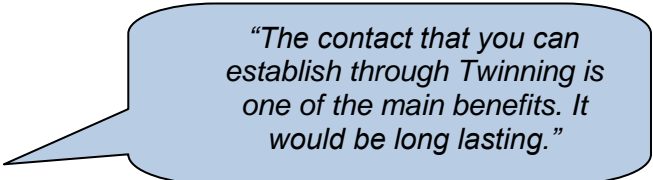
³⁰ The Twinning scenario envisaged two partners working for the same media type (e.g. print journalism) to work together on a topic of mutual interest, spending one week together in each country, resulting in a total duration of two weeks. The output was suggested to be the production of one report per participant for their respective home organisation.

topic of common interest; and Exchange³¹, a one-to-one exchange of two journalists that would take place at the same time.

Both reciprocal approaches were found interesting by most participants. Several participants mentioned that host organisations might feel that a reciprocal programme is more valuable to them, as in addition to hosting a visiting journalist, a member of their own staff would also be able to benefit from visiting an organisation abroad. Rather than just “being burdened” with having to look after the visiting journalist, they would also gain something from it, which in turn might lead host organisations to be more involved and eager to make the participants’ stay worth while. On the other hand, several participants also pointed to the potential issues for organisations resulting from a reciprocal approach in terms of the increased amount of resources that they would have to dedicate to looking after the visiting journalist as well as to covering for their member of staff during their time abroad.

Participants also felt that the intense collaboration of two media organisations that would have to liaise to facilitate the exchange of their staff was seen to support the building of networks between European media outlets. However, the potential problems for integrating freelance journalists (without an attachment to a specific organisation) into the programme were acknowledged as well, and deemed to be an obstacle for the feasibility of the approach.

From the two reciprocal approaches, Twinning was the more preferred option (and also seen as one of the most attractive approaches by a large amount of participants in all groups overall). In particular, the “built-in mentor function” through working closely alongside a twinning-partner in a staged exchange was perceived to be practical, innovative and effective, assuming that twinning partners would bring a similar level of experience into the arrangement. The opportunity to establish a long-lasting contact was also valued very highly by the majority of members in all 17 groups:



“The contact that you can establish through Twinning is one of the main benefits. It would be long lasting.”

Journalists also felt that language would not be as much of a problem for this approach, as twinning partners could effectively act as each others’ translators while researching together, and the actual reporting would take place in each of the participants’ home language anyway.

The majority of participants in most groups agreed that a Twinning programme would have to be long enough for participants to benefit from the experience, and ideally be flexible in terms of duration to fit around the different professional and personal arrangements of the potential participants. As a general guideline a duration of two weeks per country was suggested.

It was debated whether the approach would be workable for freelance journalists, and several groups reached the agreement that freelance journalists would have to be able to provide a professional working environment, i.e. an office for their Twinning partner, in order to participate. Logistically, Twinning was expected to be relatively complex due to having to match partners working for the same media type with a common interest, corresponding language skills and availability at the same time.

Participants had mixed views about the Exchange approach, and although the general idea of an organised exchange for several weeks between two journalists did appeal to a number of

³¹ The Exchange scenario envisages that two journalists from different countries working for the same media type swap jobs for a duration of 4 weeks at the same time. It was suggested that participants file reports primarily for the home organisation and contribute to the host organisation to a limited extent.

“Exchange journalists would never be able to replace each other on a one-to-one basis”.

participants, the one-to-one exchange taking place at the same time was finally dismissed as not effective, unrealistic and impracticable:

The “built-in mentor function” of the Twinning approach was also lost through the simultaneous exchange of journalists, and effective integration therefore seen as a major challenge for this scenario. As discussed in section 4.1.5.2 of this chapter, all focus groups agreed on the importance of putting in place structures for effective integration of the visiting journalist. In their view, integration into the host organisation would be crucial for the success of the programme, as participants could otherwise run the risk of ending up fulfilling purely administrative tasks not appropriate for their level of skill and experience. This was seen to be a crucial issue for the Exchange approach, and although the Mobility approach discussed above would have to face the same difficulty, it would nevertheless be less complex to arrange (as the matching of compatible exchange partners would not be necessary) and was therefore more attractive than the Exchange approach to most focus group participants.

In addition, the journalists in several groups noted that in a programme based on the Exchange approach, the participating organisations would not only lose a member of their staff, but have to provide the resources to integrate and manage the visiting journalist as well. As discussed above, this would result in a double burden for the participating media organisations, which might make it difficult to convince editors to let their staff take part. The staged exchange of the Twinning approach would avoid this issue.

Finally, the inaccessibility for freelance journalists, who would not be in a position to provide an environment where their exchange partner could effectively work for several weeks, was seen as a major shortcoming of the Exchange approach by the majority of journalists across all groups.

4.1.3.3 Cooperation

The Cooperation approach³², where a team of journalists from different countries would be matched to work together on a topic of common interest (initially on a remote basis before meeting up to exchange findings and ideas in person), was generally found interesting during the discussions. However, it did not convince the participants of its benefits in the end. While the journalists appreciated the networking character of the approach as well as its openness to freelance journalists, there was a feeling that the administrative effort of matching teams of journalists and producing saleable outputs as a team working together remotely might outweigh the benefits of this scenario. Several groups seemed to doubt that the final output would be a professional, saleable journalistic product.

The Spanish and German focus groups also agreed that the Cooperation approach might primarily have a positive long-term effect for the participants (especially in terms of networking), rather than an immediate tangible benefit for the participating organisations, which might make it less attractive for editors to let

I’m not sure the outcome of this “cooperation” would be that useful. The final product might be more like an informative paper, rather than a saleable report.”

³² In the Cooperation scenario, groups of 3-4 journalists research a topic relevant in several MS, meet to discuss, share findings and produce a story for their home organisations. Contact with other participants can extend over a period of a couple months, but actual time spent abroad together is limited to a few days.

their staff take part. In addition, members of several groups (e.g. UK, Germany) noted that the intense teamwork character of this approach, initially perceived as its main strong point, could turn into a weakness if the competitive nature of journalism would end up preventing real collaboration and a fair exchange of material and research findings.

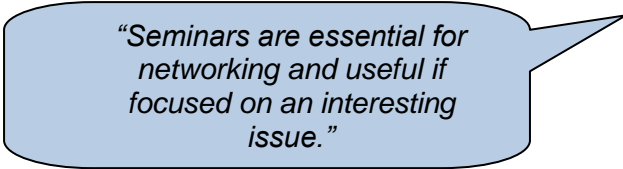
A number of groups also agreed that Cooperation was not appropriate to achieve any of the objectives discussed in section 4.1.2.1 of this chapter. The time spent in another EU Member State would simply not be long enough to realistically further the participants’ understanding of another country, and there would only be limited, if any, exposure to another media organisation so that there would be less opportunity for knowledge sharing and mutual learning than in the other approaches.

4.1.3.4 Seminars

The suggestion of seminars³³, taking place in the space of several days either in Brussels or another location of specific interest, generated very mixed views, ranging from “unnecessary and boring” to “useful and essential for networking”. However, the vast majority of participants across all groups agreed that seminars are already offered widely and are not in line with their ideas of what an Erasmus-like programme should provide. However, many felt that within an Erasmus programme for journalists, seminars could be combined with one of the other approaches (rather than understood as a stand-alone element).

The usefulness of a seminar added on to one of the other approaches was appreciated by almost all participants, although for different reasons. Networking was seen to be a major appeal of seminars, possibly benefiting one of the approaches resulting in shorter programmes (such as the Twinning or Cooperation scenarios discussed during the groups), where participants would spend a limited amount of time abroad and therefore have less exposure to other journalists.

Overall seminars were seen to be a potentially useful addition to an Erasmus programme for journalists that would benefit freelance and permanent journalists from all types of media fields and of all levels of experience alike, if they were added on to another programme.



“Seminars are essential for networking and useful if focused on an interesting issue.”

Participants also felt that, depending on the seminar content, seminars could contribute towards achieving objectives 1 and 3, by either focusing on EU-related information or other relevant areas that would meet the journalists’ needs in terms of enhancing their professional skills and abilities (e.g. how to carry out primary research). However, finding a topic interesting and relevant for all programme participants would present a substantial challenge, especially considering that participants would be going to a wide range of member states to work on a variety of topics and might not have a common area of interest suitable for an added seminar. A seminar element preceding the programme or added on at the end would also impact on the timing of the programme, and the individual visits abroad would have to be coordinated with each other to find a date suitable for the seminar to take place. The majority of participants in most groups felt that this element of rigidity would make the programme less attractive to them.

³³ The Seminar scenario provides seminars for journalists on relevant European topics either in Brussels or another relevant location in a EU Member State. The seminars would have a duration of 2-5 days.

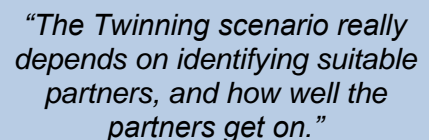
Participants of most groups also felt that seminars might not be innovative enough to convince potential participants and editors of their added value, and suggested that attending a seminar would be an additional aspect of the programme that would have to be justified by journalists in terms of spending several days away from their regular employment, which might actually not be necessary considering the range of seminars for journalists currently already on offer.

4.1.3.5 Twinning vs. Mobility

Overall, the approaches that were deemed most attractive and interesting by the vast majority of focus group participants were the general Mobility approach and the approach of staged reciprocal visits (Twinning). Although the Twinning version of the reciprocity approach was preferred overall, a large number of those preferring Twinning to Mobility also acknowledged the fact that Twinning would potentially be more difficult to implement due to a number of factors partly mentioned above. Firstly, suitable twinning partners with a common interest would have to be found and matched, which would be logistically much more complicated than the simple placement of individual journalists within organisations in the Mobility approach without the element of reciprocity. The members of individual groups (e.g. EU) questioned whether the programme would generate enough interest to attract a critical mass of potential twinning partners, and suggested that the programme would have to rely on existing personal networks between journalists at least initially.

The strong collaborative element of two partners working together was seen both as a strength (in terms of the opportunity to establish a solid, long-lasting professional contact) as described above, and as a weakness as the success of the approach would depend strongly on how well the partners could work with each other:

As mentioned above, Twinning also bears potential difficulties with regard to the integration of freelance journalists, and the organisation responsible for matching partners would have to establish a system to ensure that freelance journalists would be able to provide a professional working environment for their partner.



“The Twinning scenario really depends on identifying suitable partners, and how well the partners get on.”

It was therefore acknowledged that although Twinning sounded more appealing to the majority of focus group members initially, issues regarding the implementation of this programme could impact negatively on the programme overall and reduce its appeal to potential participants due to the more complex administrative nature of this scenario, e.g. in terms of waiting times. They would also have to expect a lesser degree of flexibility when arranging the timeframe of the programme as this would have to be coordinated with their Twinning partner.

Summing up, there was widespread agreement that due to their many potential benefits, Twinning visits represent the ideal approach. However, there are a number of practical obstacles to implementing such an approach, and participants voiced concerns that insisting on reciprocity could significantly limit the scope and openness of the programme. Many therefore held that reciprocity (ideally in a staged rather than a simultaneous way) should be facilitated, but not required from all programme participants.

4.1.4 Duration

Although the majority of participants in most groups (apart from Spain and the UK) agreed that a shorter programme would be more feasible to implement, views on the ideal length of the programme differed greatly, ranging from one to two weeks to six or even twelve months. Clearly, there is a tension between desirability (many journalists would like the opportunity to spend an extended period of time abroad) against feasibility (longer stays abroad are difficult to reconcile with the economic, professional, personal and other circumstances and realities of journalists and the media they work for).

Generally it can be said that the majority of the younger focus group participants, usually at early stages of their career and in less senior positions, were more in favour of a longer programme (e.g. as discussed in the UK and Spanish focus groups) and felt that a longer duration abroad would increase the benefit they would derive from participating. Their line of argumentation was that a longer time spent abroad would give participants the chance to “really find their feet” and gain an in-depth insight into the procedures of the host organisation, which in their view would increase the overall benefit of the programme substantially. Several of the younger participants (e.g. in the Spanish and Polish focus groups) were also of the opinion that a longer programme would provide a chance for the visiting journalists to improve their language skills, rather than considering good language skills as a pre-requirement for participating in the programme.

Most of the more experienced journalists in more senior positions were much more cautious regarding the length of the programme, taking into consideration the potential participants’ individual professional as well as personal circumstances. Their view was that the programme should be as compact as possible, striking a balance between minimising the resources used in terms of the amount of time spent away from the participant’s place of work and home and maximising the benefits that can feasibly be derived for a journalist from working in a media organisation abroad. In simple words, their opinion in terms of duration can be summed up with “as little time as possible, as much as necessary”.

This group of journalists also suggested that the level of benefit of participating in the programme would not be increased endlessly by extending the time spent abroad, but that a maximum level of benefit would be reached after a relatively short time. This opinion is mainly based on the assumption that the extent to which the participating journalists can contribute to the host organisation’s work in a meaningful way is only marginal, due to the language barrier that most participants would inevitably face (unless their proficiency of the language of their host organisation is extremely high). While the more experienced members of the focus groups didn’t suggest that the language barrier would prevent participants from benefiting from the programme altogether, they did argue that for most participants the benefits would not be derived from extensive, professional contribution to the host organisation’s work, but from the overall experience of working for another media organisation in a foreign country and the exposure to a new working environment with different structures and processes, technical standards, codes of conducts etc., as well as potentially research / work on a specific topic of interest. Based on this assumption, their line of argument was that the benefit derived from this exposure would reach a point of diminishing returns after a relatively short period of time (i.e. 2-4 weeks), after which any further time spent abroad would be less useful.

One aspect participants of all ages and levels of seniority agreed on in terms of the duration of the programme was *flexibility*. The vast majority across all groups stated that participants should be given the freedom to adapt the length of their stay abroad to their personal circumstances, to make the programme accessible to the broadest range of journalists possible. This aspect is especially important in the light of the vast array of working arrangements of journalists today,

ranging from journalists in full, permanent employment to freelance journalists producing material for a number of different organisations and everything else in between.

4.1.5 Practical issues

4.1.5.1 Language

Almost all of the participants across all groups agreed that language is a key issue that has to be considered when designing the programme. As the programme is based around giving journalists the opportunity to work in another EU Member State with a view to deriving certain benefits from this (e.g. increased knowledge of the country visited, networking, insight into the processes of a different media organisation), the impact of the possible difficulties arising from the inevitable language barrier on the usefulness of this experience has to be taken into account.

The majority of participants was of the opinion that in order for both visiting journalists and their host media to benefit fully from the experience, at least an intermediate knowledge of the language of the host country was an indispensable pre-requisite. At the same time, some noted that even a very good knowledge of the language spoken in the host organisation would not enable the visiting journalist to actually produce any professional journalistic output that can be published by the host. Nonetheless, other participants argued that the programme could be beneficial even if visitors did not have sufficient language skills to write or report for their host media. Several groups were concerned in particular with low levels of language skills for smaller countries (e.g. Estonia or Denmark), and several participants held the view that a good knowledge of the English language as a kind of *lingua franca* or a basic understanding of the language of the host organisation would be sufficient to be able to achieve a learning effect and contribute to the work of the host organisation in any country, even without actually producing any outputs that can be directly published.

Similar to the discussion around the duration of the programme, the focus group discussions revealed that whether participants felt that the language barrier is also a substantial barrier to a beneficial experience on the programme overall or not, largely depended on their understanding of the *type* of benefit programme participants should ideally gain from their experience: participants who were of the opinion that a general insight into a different organisation and Member State to broaden the journalists' knowledge and provide opportunities for networking would be the main feasible benefit from the programme didn't see a low level of language skills as a major concern. Again, this view was mainly held by younger, less experienced members of the groups who were visibly more enthusiastic about the general idea of spending time in a media organisation abroad. Several of these journalists also suggested that the improvement of language skills could be one of the objectives of the programme, rather than a pre-requirement.

On the other hand, participants who expected the main benefits of the programme to be gained from solid, meaningful contributions to the host organisations' work including the production of tangible outputs (i.e. reports published by the host) felt that the language barrier would prohibit this and therefore reduce the scope for gaining something from the programme. These journalists were therefore also of the opinion that an Erasmus programme for journalists should be short and compact, as meaningful contribution could not be achieved anyway and the (nevertheless acknowledged) level of benefit achieved from gaining insight into the new working environment would be saturated after a relatively short time (see section 4.1.4 on *Duration*). This was mainly the opinion of experienced journalists in more senior positions, who were generally more cautious regarding the cost-benefit ratio of the programme rather than being captured by the enthusiasm

for the general idea of an exchange programme for journalists, like the younger members of the groups.

To summarise the debate around language it can be said that although views regarding the negative impact of the language barrier on the level of benefit of the programme differed, the majority of participants in most groups agreed that participants would be able to benefit to some degree from a programme aimed at providing the opportunity to gain insight into another media organisation and EU Member State even if only basic language skills were in place.

4.1.5.2 Integration

Effective integration of the visiting journalist into the host organisation was perceived to be crucial for the success of the programme by the majority of the focus groups (and was discussed at length in particular in the German and Danish groups). While the level of language skill needed was seen to be strongly linked to the type of benefit that can be gained from the programme (and therefore to the objective that the programme should realistically aim for), the journalists felt that the effective integration of the participants was paramount, regardless of the type of benefit expected.

The prevailing view was that integration can only be achieved if a member of staff of the host organisation was designated to drive integration, ensuring that the participant's skills and abilities were matched to the type of work delegated to him/her. This poses the question of resources, and the majority of journalists across all groups questioned that significant resources could realistically be made available in host organisations to manage the visiting journalists, especially over longer periods of time. There was a general concern that without proper orientation and planning of the visits, journalists would only be dealing with administrative tasks not appropriate to their level of skill and experience (or expectation), which could result in a substantial decrease of the benefit gained from the experience.

This major concern explains why the majority of focus groups voiced a preference for the Twinning scenario, where the “built-in mentor function” through the close collaboration between the twinning partners would fully alleviate the problem of integration.

4.1.5.3 Content of work

When first discussing whether participants should primarily keep on working for their home organisation or contribute to the work of the host organisation during their time on the programme, participants throughout the groups had very mixed views regarding this issue.

The majority of the more experienced journalists stated that contributing to the home organisation to a certain degree would be appropriate, especially with a view to convincing editors that the loss of resources through sending their staff onto the programme will be kept to a minimum. It was also mentioned several times that a media organisation that has agreed to keep on paying the salary of their staff participating in the programme, would most likely expect to receive some type of tangible output in return, such as a report filed by the participant that can be published by the home organisation.

On the other hand, filing reports for the home organisation was seen as less useful for shorter versions of the programme, and there was a general concern that this would be a barrier to integration of the visiting journalists who would most likely prioritise the work assigned to them by their regular employer (which would in turn reduce the interest of the host organisation in providing proper orientation and integration). This could substantially decrease the quality of experience for

the participant as they couldn't fully concentrate on the host organisation during their relatively short visit.

To summarise the different positions amongst the group members, it was suggested that participants should be expected to continue filing reports for their home organisation if abroad for a substantial amount of time (i.e. 4+ weeks). For programmes of shorter durations (which were generally thought to be more realistic), participants should have the freedom to fully participate in the host organisation's work, and only produce a limited amount of material for the home organisation if this does not negatively impact on their work for the host.

The question of whether or not there should be a set of individual objectives for the journalists attending the programme was also discussed, and while not all focus group members were strongly in favour of this suggestion, no one was actually against it. A number of more experienced journalists stated that having to fulfil a set of objectives whilst on the programme could be a measure towards ensuring that the programme does not get abused as a “free holiday”, and provide some guidance for the participant, as well as for the host organisation, with regard to what level of involvement can and should be expected of the participant. The general consensus was that a minimal level of objectives (or deliverables) should be set, taking into account the individual circumstances of the journalist and the host organisation.

4.1.5.4 Matching partners

The issue of how to bring interested journalists and potential host organisations together was seen to be an important aspect of the programme design by the majority of members in most focus groups. Even for the Mobility approach, which doesn't have a reciprocal element, a system would have to be put in place to match journalists to organisations that are willing to host them, which will generally only be the case if there are likely to be benefits on both sides.

When discussing the Exchange, Twinning and Cooperation programmes in particular, many of the group members across all groups declared their concern regarding the successful matching of partners for these schemes. Firstly, the administrative effort for finding and matching compatible partners was expected to be considerable and lengthy. Secondly, there was some concern about the matching of freelance journalists, who had to be selected on the basis of being able to provide a professional working environment for the Twinning programme.

Suggestions on how to organise up the matching process included to encourage interested journalists to find their own partners at dedicated events (Exchange and Twinning); and an internet platform where journalists could register their interest and availability (Mobility, Exchange and Cooperation). Both provisions would be facilitated and administered by the organisation managing the programme.

In addition, the groups in two countries (Romania and Germany) discussed the possibility of engaging host organisations in the selection of the journalists visiting them, to ensure that they had more control over who they were hosting. This in turn was seen to create a more positive attitude towards the exchange journalists, and possibly more willingness to put more effort into their full integration.

Similarly, another group (Denmark) largely agreed that home organisations should have some level of control over the type of organisation their staff is being placed in. This way, home organisations would be able to steer their staff towards hosts they perceive to be credible and valuable contacts, and the opportunities for networking and collaboration arising from the exchange of individual members of staff would benefit the entire organisation in the long term.

4.1.6 Funding

Funding was discussed at length as a key issue for the programme. Expectations regarding the level of funding provided by the EC depended mostly on the duration of the programme. It was generally agreed across all 17 groups that a programme of a duration ranging between 2-4 (possibly up to 6) weeks could be funded partly by the home organisation (most of which would likely be willing to continue paying the participant’s salary) and the EC (who would cover additional costs such as travel, accommodation and sustenance). It was noted several times that the continuous payment of the participant’s salary by the home organisation was crucial for ensuring that a degree of independence from the EC was being kept, although the majority of journalists did also seem to feel comfortable with the idea of ensuring independence through other means, e.g. contractual arrangements explicitly stating that participants would be free to produce journalistic material without any limitations.

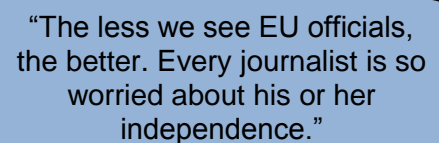
Focus group participants were very sceptical about the ability and willingness of media outlets (home organisations) to continue to pay the salary of permanently employed staff members wishing to take part in a visit with a length of more than a few weeks. Participants felt that editors would generally not be convinced that the benefits of sending their employees on the programme would outweigh the extra use of resources needed to cover for them. The only way in which such a programme would be feasible would be if journalists took an unpaid sabbatical. In this case, the EC payment to journalists would also have to cover at least part of the lost income. A few participants also suggested that the EC should financially compensate home and host organisations (as agreed on by members of the focus groups in Poland and Spain) for agreeing to second or host a member of staff for longer periods of time.

Funding freelance journalists to participate in the programme was perceived to be a major issue by some of the groups (e.g. Spain, Germany, Denmark, International group) and many of the freelance journalists in the groups suggested that even a short programme wouldn’t be accessible to many freelance journalists if no compensation for the lost income (since programme participants generally wouldn’t be able to sell content to their usual outlets to the same extent during their stay abroad) was provided in addition to covering their travel, accommodation and sustenance costs. The additional difficulty of a decreased income for freelance journalists *after* their return from the programme due to work contacts that might have dried up was another point made to back up the need for compensation for journalists in this position.

4.1.7 Administration and lead of programme

In terms of the administration of the programme, the participants of nearly all groups strongly voiced their concern about too much influence from the EC. A strong involvement of the EC was not seen to be desirable and perceived as a threat to journalistic independence:

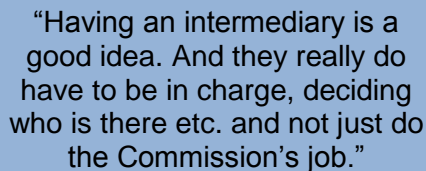
This point was mainly made with regard to the output(s) produced while on the programme (as well as the programme funding received by the participants), and it was feared that participating journalists would not have the freedom to produce articles that are critical of the EU or an area related to this. It was suggested in several groups



“The less we see EU officials, the better. Every journalist is so worried about his or her independence.”

(e.g. Germany, Denmark, UK, Spain, Poland, International group) that the EC should assume the role of the funding institution behind the scenes, and appoint or establish an intermediary organisation to run the programme on behalf of the EC:

Similarly, appointing an intermediary organisation as the face of the programme was also seen to be beneficial in terms of branding: to make the programme as appealing as possible for professional journalists who are keen to add to their journalistic experience rather than taking advantage of a subsidised holiday, it was suggested that the branding of the programme should not be too EC-oriented, but headed by a respected institution associated with the journalistic profession.



“Having an intermediary is a good idea. And they really do have to be in charge, deciding who is there etc. and not just do the Commission’s job.”

4.1.8 Summary

The discussion around the objectives of the programme revealed that the prevailing view in the focus groups was that although all three objectives were deemed valid and desirable to some extent, objective 2 (further journalists’ understanding of other MS and their media) was seen to be the unique selling point, and the only objective that is currently not addressed by existing initiatives. This objective can be most feasibly achieved through a programme that is built around placing journalists in host organisations in other EU Member States (and not through seminars or other looser forms of cooperation).

With regard to the structure of the programme, the parameters suggested in the individual scenarios (based on the approaches of Mobility, Reciprocal Exchange, Cooperation and Seminars) were discussed controversially in the focus groups, reflecting how different the needs and expectations of different groups of journalists are. This points to the need to design the programme in a flexible way. One of the main outcomes of the discussions around the parameters of the programme was the need for a high degree of adaptability regarding the programme duration, but also regarding the work content and the general structure, i.e. whether journalists would engage in a type of reciprocal exchange or simply be placed in an organisation without another journalist from their host organisation visiting them in return. Similarly, flexibility was also required with regard to the type of media organisation participants would be placed in, and all groups were in favour of allowing cross-media exchanges: although most journalists would be most interested in spending time at a media outlet that’s similar to their own, many journalists today work across several types of media (e.g. print/online) and need broad skill sets to succeed in the competitive environment of journalism.

In summary, all participants felt that in order to be attractive and accessible to as many journalists as possible, the programme would have to be flexible enough to adapt to a wide range of professional and personal circumstances, and working arrangements.

The wide range of views and opinions as to how the programme should be structured and what it should achieve also suggests that giving journalists and their organisations a strong role in deciding on the key aspects of the individual visits within the programme to leave room for participants to adjust e.g. the nature and length of their visit as well as the content of work to suit their specific needs and interests, would help to develop an offering that is relevant and accessible for a sufficiently wide range of different sub-groups of journalists and media outlets.

Although the views around the actual parameters of the programme (e.g. duration) differed substantially, discussions revealed that a successful programme would have to strike a balance between aiming to meet the broad range of needs and expectations of its target group(s) and representing a provision with realistic objectives and a feasible economic and practical (administrative) framework. In order to reach this balance between desirability and feasibility, the programme would clearly have to prioritise some of the journalists’ needs and expectations over others, e.g. although many participants were in favour of a longer programme lasting several months, the implications this would have in financial terms (for the participating organisations as well as the funder) and logistic effort (mainly for the participants themselves) points towards the merits of a shorter programme duration.

4.2 Interviews with potential host organisations

4.2.1 Introduction

To gain insight into the opinions and needs of potential host organisations, telephone interviews have been carried out with a sample of 28 editors from media outlets located around Europe. In order to ensure interviewees have sufficient expertise and authority, they were limited to senior editors who would be in a position to influence whether their organisation would participate in the programme.

Due to editors' hectic and irregular schedules, interviews were kept to a maximum of 30 minutes and focused on the key issues affecting whether and to what extent their media outlets would be able to benefit from a future ERASMUS for journalists programme. These included editors' opinions on the general feasibility of the programme, factors influencing whether they would be willing to host programme participants, factors influencing whether they would be willing to send journalists on the programme and costs the Commission would be expected to cover. In addition, members of the study team recorded detailed profile data about the media outlets of each interviewee, allowing responses to be considered alongside differences in media type (e.g. print, TV, radio etc.), ownership structure (public or private) and size. This also allowed the study team to ensure broad coverage of a wide variety of media organisations.

Overall, interviews were conducted with 28 editors. These were made up of a broadly representative sample of Member States, including three editors from Germany, two each from Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden and one each from Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and the UK. About half of editors worked for publicly owned media outlets, while the rest were at privately run organisations. 13 of the 28 editors interviewed represented print and / or online media, while there were seven working in radio and eight in television. The sample of editors interviewed also included a wide variety of working environments, with 11 editors representing small or medium sized media with less than 100 journalists, and 17 working for large media with over 100 journalists. The interview guide, as well as a table summarising key information about the profile of interviewees, can be found in annex A3.

4.2.2 General interest in an ERASMUS for journalists programme

First reactions to the idea of an ERASMUS-like programme for journalists were very positive among editors interviewed. There were a multitude of reasons given for this. Some editors, mostly from smaller media, thought it would be interesting for their journalists to learn about more advanced journalistic techniques being practised at larger media. Others considered participating in the programme as a useful way to build a network of contacts and sources in another Member State. One editor added that temporarily joining another news team would allow journalists to gain new perspectives on their everyday jobs, while another mentioned 'mutual understanding' as a key benefit of any time spent in another Member State. Several editors explained that gaining a sense of how other Member States work, both on political and cultural levels, would be a worthwhile outcome of a mobility or exchange programme. In the words of one editor from southern Europe, 'When I look at Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania, I find it surprising to see how little we know about our neighbours'.

On a more practical level, some editors, especially those representing privately owned media from smaller Member States, highlighted that a decreasing number of postings for foreign correspondents reduces the opportunity for journalists to experience other countries and cultures. An ERASMUS-like programme for journalists could partially remedy this problem. In addition, the lack of foreign postings leads to a growing reliance on other media and agencies such as Reuters in order for media from smaller Member States to report on foreign news. An ERASMUS-like programme for journalists was also seen by these editors as a potential way for their media outlet to gain their own perspective on events occurring elsewhere in Europe.

About half of the editors interviewed had participated previously in exchange or mobility programmes aimed at students or journalists. These editors had had their perceptions shaped by these experiences and were overall more enthusiastic than others about the potential benefits of a future programme, and pointed to their previous experiences as important stages in their professional and personal development. Benefits of their time abroad included a deepened understanding of other countries and cultures, increased knowledge of journalistic techniques and a broadened network of sources. Interviewees also noted the durability and continued usefulness of relationships made during visits to other countries.

4.2.3 Willingness to participate in the programme

Nearly all editors were willing for their media to participate in the programme, either by sending journalists to media outlets elsewhere in Europe and / or by hosting journalists from other Member States. This was mainly because editors expected the programme to yield positive impacts for their organisations. Building networks of sources and contacts was a prime motivator for editors, both in their capacity to host journalists and send their own staff for visits abroad. Editors felt that even as hosts their organisations would benefit from increased insight into another Member State, as visiting journalists would share their experiences and views with their temporary colleagues. Sending a journalist to participate in the programme would allow him or her to report knowledgeably about the visited Member State in future. It would also provide the sending media organisation with the opportunity to publish first-hand accounts of another Member State, an especially enticing possibility given reduced budgets for travel and posting foreign correspondents. In addition, several editors also mentioned that allowing journalists to participate in the programme would improve staff morale.

However, while none of the editors were opposed to a new programme in principle, nearly all of them expressed some reservations to participating and conditions that would need to be met in terms of practicalities, logistics and the exact parameters of an eventual programme. These are discussed below and grouped according to the main issues that editors brought up.

4.2.3.1 Language

The language barrier was a crucial issue that all editors interviewed mentioned without prompting from study team members. It was seen to permeate or hang over all other aspects of the programme and would, in editors' opinions, need to be carefully considered in setting its parameters.

Given that the majority of participating journalists would not share a mother tongue with their hosts, language issues were seen to present significant problems. Concerns about inadequate

language skills were especially pronounced because the programme would likely entail participants *working as journalists* for host organisations, rather than simply observing others at work or carrying out trainee-like tasks. There was not widespread agreement, however, as to how big the implications of language issues on the programme would be. To some extent, editors' opinions varied in function of the types of media they worked for and the languages spoken in their countries. Overall, editors for broadcast media, especially those working in countries whose languages are not much spoken by foreigners, were most concerned about language issues. They felt that a visiting journalist attempting to work as a journalist in such countries would face nearly insurmountable obstacles. This was not only a concern for editors from small Member States, such as Bulgaria and Portugal, but also for larger ones such as Poland.

Editors representing print media expressed a wide range of views on language, without a clear consensus emerging as to how language would impact on the programme. Several editors, principally from Member States with smaller languages, did not feel that the language skills of visiting journalists would pose a large practical impediment to success. In addition, some editors felt that the host media organisation would be able to translate articles written by participating journalists on the condition that the programme was kept sufficiently short (maximum six weeks). These articles would not consist of conventional pieces of reporting, but of special contributions from the visiting correspondent. These could, for example, give a foreign perspective on the national politics and culture of the host country, or offer readers insight into the participant's Member State. Other editors did not feel it would be feasible to translate or extensively proofread articles from visiting journalists, even to a limited extent. While these editors did not question the validity of an ERASMUS-like programme for journalists, they pictured visiting journalists making looser contributions, such as helping with research, acting as an expert on their own country and sharing contacts, sources and techniques.

Editors were nearly unanimous in rejecting the notion that visiting journalists would be able consistently to produce written reports for host organisations. They explained that language is the 'primary tool in a [print] journalist's arsenal' and that even foreign journalists with highly advanced language skills would usually not be able to write as would a journalist from the country in question. Only one editor dissented from this point of view, pointing to her own time on an exchange with a media outlet in Germany. She explained that, since editors normally spend a considerable amount of time proofreading and amending text written by their journalists, adapting written reports from a non-native speaker would not take substantially longer.

As stated above, most interviewees were of the opinion that language issues would preclude most journalists from contributing directly to a host media organisation in another country. Since participating journalists would engage continuously with host organisations (no matter the tasks they would carry out), it was unquestionable in the minds of editors that speaking the language of the host country would be advantageous. However, they did not agree as to whether such language skills should be necessary. Overall, editors' opinions fell into two groups according to the size of the language they spoke. Editors from countries with relatively widely spoken languages, such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, expected visiting journalists to speak their national language (or in one case even the regional language) in order to profit from the programme. Editors from smaller Member States, such as Sweden, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Slovenia, admitted that it would be difficult to find participants able to speak their languages. Instead, this group of editors considered it more important to ensure staff at their media organisation shared a *lingua franca* with participating journalists. In most cases, this would be English, though French and German were also mentioned.

4.2.3.2 Tasks journalists are expected to carry out while participating

Hosting journalists

Editors were asked if, during the programme, journalists would be expected to work primarily for the *host* media organisation, or whether they should continue to file reports primarily for their *home* media. In this area there was considerable disagreement among editors.

Editors did mostly agree about what visiting journalists *would not* be able to do: namely they would not work as a ‘normal’ reporter for the host organisation. While some editors felt that visiting journalists would be able to file a few reports for the host organisation, these would be limited to special pieces directly related to journalists’ status as a foreigner. These could consist of (as explained above), for example, articles looking at national issues from the perspective of someone from another Member State, articles demonstrating similarities or differences in national policy or how a European policy affected both host and sending countries.

A considerable proportion of editors doubted whether visiting journalists would be able to carry out any useful work for the hosting organisation at all. This was especially the case among editors from large, publicly funded broadcasters. In the words of one editor, ‘One can’t just show up somewhere and apply his [journalistic] skills the way a teacher or architect would’. With his reasoning, a journalist needs to be attuned to political and cultural sensitivities that simply could not be gained over a short period of time. This group of interviewees felt that visiting journalists would mostly observe the host organisation’s activities and thereby gain new skills. Given the size and resources of their organisations, editors in this group did not feel it would be difficult to provide visiting journalists with a ‘mentor’ who could introduce him / her to their organisation. At the same time, participants could continue working for the home organisation by filing stories remotely.

Another group of editors, mostly from the EU-12, remarked that their human and financial resources were severely constrained. However, this common problem did not lead them to agree on whether a visiting journalist would serve as an additional ‘set of eyes and hands’, or a further drain on already scarce resources. Thus a number of editors from this group claimed it would be impossible to host a foreign journalist without native-level language skills, while others welcomed the prospect of extra help from an experienced journalist in the office almost regardless of the visitor’s specific (language) skills.

About half of editors, mostly from print media, took another approach. They admitted that, except in rare cases, visiting journalists would not be able to file stories as a native journalist would. At the same time, they would be able to contribute as journalists through helping with research and performing other ad hoc tasks. In addition, they would be able to share their own knowledge and skills. Insight into the home countries of visiting journalists was especially sought after in two ways. Firstly, media outlets from small countries with few foreign correspondents would be able to improve their coverage of other Member States with the help of the participant, whether he / she came from a large or small country. Secondly, visiting journalists from small countries would be able to provide host organisations with previously unavailable information, since even media outlets from larger Member States do not have correspondents placed in such countries.

Sending journalists

Most editors asserted that if their journalists were to participate in the programme they would be expected to continue working for their home organisations during their stay abroad, at least to a limited extent. This would vary considerably according to the eventual length of the programme. For a programme lasting up to several weeks (most editors would not accept longer absences unless journalists took an unpaid sabbatical, see below), journalists could file a number of stories

relating to the host country. In some cases, and depending on the country in question, the journalist could carry out research and interviews for a feature or longer reportage.

Editors from print media in particular did not feel it would be difficult for journalists to stay involved with their home media while away. For broadcast media, however, this presented significant challenges relating to footage. Editors explained that sharing footage between media outlets would be difficult, while the scope for sending a camera crew to another Member State for a story would be limited. Therefore, editors from broadcast media, to a much greater extent than their colleagues in print, did not expect their journalists to work for home organisations while participating in the programme.

4.2.3.3 Duration

In terms of an appropriate duration for the programme, editors divided themselves into essentially two groups: those in favour of a short programme (up to six weeks) and those in favour of a long programme (from two months up to one year).

About half of editors fell into each group, with no discernable link between preferences and media type and / or Member State. However, editors' favoured length for the programme did influence their expectations of it. Overall, those editors who favoured a longer programme felt that participants should primarily focus on increasing their journalistic skills. For these editors the selection of host media was of utmost importance: they would only agree to their journalists spending more than a few weeks abroad if they got to experience and learn the ways of a more 'advanced' host media outlet, such as the BBC or *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The editors who favoured a shorter programme (duration of no more than a few weeks) placed the emphasis on learning about the host Member State (rather than the host media). In their view, spending time with the host media would enable participants to gain insight into another country, build a network there and produce stories for their home organisations.

It is also important to note that for editors favouring a shorter programme, stays abroad of several months were not at all feasible. According to these interviewees, it would be unlikely for journalists to retain their original employment conditions if they chose to spend a long period away from their desks. Editors that expressed a preference for a long programme, however, mostly felt that shorter stays could also be useful.

4.2.3.4 Guidance / mentoring

All editors interviewed agreed that some form of guidance or mentoring for visiting journalist would be essential. This guidance would likely start with an introduction to the host organisation and its journalists and would extend to helping the participant build contacts, arrange and conduct interviews and, in some cases, assistance in proof reading and copy editing contributions made by the participant.

Overall, editors from larger organisations did not view providing guidance / mentoring for participants as an obstacle to the success of the programme. Publicly owned media outlets in particular were generally prepared to donate staff time to mentoring, with one editor stating that 'at public media, providing guidance to a visiting journalist fits with our brief as a public service

broadcaster’. The larger teams present in such organisations, sometimes amounting to hundreds of journalists, also increased editors’ confidence that ‘someone would always be able to help’.

Smaller media took a less sanguine view. Due to human resource constraints, they would not easily be able to contribute scarce time to managing a visiting journalist. For these editors in particular, some form of reciprocity, whereby the programme would consist of a more direct exchange between two organisations, would to some extent address this issue.

4.2.3.5 Reciprocity

Editors expressed a wide variety of opinions when asked whether there should be some link between hosting organisations sending their own journalists to participate in the programme. Over half of interviewees did not feel that sending a participant on the programme would be an added incentive to their willingness to host a visiting journalist. While most editors in this group claimed that they would allow their journalists to participate in the programme, in their opinion the activities of hosting and sending journalists were both valid and worth pursuing without being connected to each other.

Moreover, a considerable number of editors expressed the view that matching journalists for a reciprocal exchange would act as a significant constraint. There were several reasons for this. One editor explained that the media outlets likely to be interested in sending a journalist to his organisation would not necessarily be attractive for journalists from his organisation to visit. In other words, he felt that journalists would see the programme as an opportunity to spend some time at a more advanced organisation (e.g. a journalist from a national newspaper from a small country would spend some time at *The Guardian* or *Le Monde*). Aside from this consideration, matching journalists might be difficult for reasons such as differing language skills and interests. Other editors pointed to competition between media outlets in different Member States. While this would not pose problems for individual journalists from competing media outlets applying for the programme, some editors felt that a reciprocal exchange would pose problems at an organisation level.

Although in the minority, a significant proportion of editors were strongly in favour of a reciprocal exchange. However, nearly all of these interviewees stressed that this should not entail a simultaneous exchange. Instead, the exchange should be staged, i.e. the participants should visit each other’s media organisations at different times. In this way, participants in the programme would be able to offer each other the guidance and mentoring that editors described as ‘crucial’. Such an arrangement would also leave options open for collaborative work (e.g. jointly produced stories) between participants.

4.2.4 Costs

All editors interviewed agreed that the Commission should take charge of travel and subsistence costs for participants. However, it was also noted that in order to pay expenses at home (e.g. apartment, car insurance) journalists would in many cases be dependent on a continued ability to draw their usual salaries. Most editors viewed participation in the programme as a form of training and expressed a willingness to contribute to its funding, albeit on a limited basis given financial constraints and downward pressure on costs.

Therefore, with some variation in opinion, most editors interviewed explained that they should be able to continue to pay journalists during stays abroad of up to about one month if the journalists kept filing stories for their home organisation (although for a small minority of editors from particularly resource-constrained media outlets, the maximum acceptable length was only one or two weeks). With rare exceptions, those editors who favoured a longer programme conceded that it would not be possible to pay journalists a salary during their time abroad. Instead, this group of editors would allow journalists to take an unpaid sabbatical if they were to spend several months with a media outlet in another Member State. A couple of editors added that even regular contributors to their media worked on freelance contracts and were paid according to output. Therefore, their ability to draw a salary while abroad, no matter the length, would be based solely on their ability to continue filing reports.

4.2.5 Conclusions

Editors expressed an overall openness to an ERASMUS-like programme for journalists. All interviewees found the idea both interesting and potentially useful, and with rare exceptions would consider hosting journalists at their organisations as well as allowing their journalists to take part. In terms of the programme objectives, editors felt, to varying degrees, it could increase journalists' skills and help them learn about other Member States. It is notable that editors did not express a great interest in a programme seeking to improve knowledge and understand about the EU, both because they consider ample opportunities for EU training already exist and because work with another media outlet would not necessarily contribute to such an aim.

4.2.5.1 Favoured parameters

Editors did not have a clear set of favoured parameters to which they felt an ERASMUS-like programme for journalists should adhere, but some conclusions can be drawn from the findings. Though editors expressed preferences for a range of different lengths for the programme, they also revealed that, in most cases, it would not be possible for journalists to keep receiving their salaries during stays abroad of more than about four to six weeks. In addition, most editors preferring a short (i.e. several weeks) programme were inflexible on this point, while many of those favouring a long programme (i.e. several months) were also open to quicker options. Thus, it can be said that overall editors found a shorter programme more feasible once all factors were taken into account.

Similarly, while a significant proportion (but not a majority) of interviewees considered a reciprocal exchange optimal, most editors felt that as a requirement this would impose severe limitations on the programme. A flexible programme that encouraged but did not require reciprocal exchanges would therefore suit the vast majority of editors interviewed.

Editors' opinions widely varied as to whether participating journalists should work primarily for host or sending organisations. However, in order for journalists to remain in continuous employment while participating in the programme, editors maintained that they would need at the least to carry out some work for the sending organisation.

4.2.5.2 Challenges and solutions

The main challenges highlighted by the editors interviewed related to language, time and costs. Interviewees consistently mentioned language issues as a limitation to the ability of visiting journalists to contribute meaningfully to host organisations. While some editors at print media outlets asserted that for a small number of contributions extensive proofreading and / or translation could be carried out, it was clear that nearly all journalists would be prevented from working as a local journalist during the programme (other factors, such as a lack of local political knowledge, added to this challenge). To ensure visiting journalists did contribute to host media, a number of editors suggested that, as part of a relatively short programme, a small number of journalistic reports, reflecting the participant’s unique outside perspective, could be translated.

Time (in terms of human resources) to acquaint the participant with the host media and journalistic landscape was also mentioned as a concern, especially for larger media. For some editors, the best way to address this challenge involved reciprocal (but not simultaneous) exchanges. In this model, a pair of journalists would spend time first at one of their organisations, then the other’s. Each journalist would act as a mentor when at his / her own media outlet.

According to editors, some media organisations would not be able to pay a salary to participants while they spend time away from their desks. However, the majority of editors asserted that it would be feasible to continue paying salaries provided journalists were able to contribute to their normal employer and the programme was kept to a maximum of about six weeks (though for some organisations this would be shorter).

4.3 Stakeholder workshop

On 1 December 2010, after the fieldwork and initial analysis had been finalised, a stakeholder workshop with interested organisations and individuals was held in Brussels. The purpose of the workshop was to present, discuss and seek input and feedback on the draft results of the feasibility study, including a preliminary version of the proposed implementation scheme for the test phase as described in the following section of this report. The workshop was well attended, with participants representing journalism associations, EU media, universities and journalism schools, as well as individual journalists (both freelance and permanently employed) from a range of EU Member States.

Overall, the results of the study and the suggested implementation scheme were very well received, with reactions reflecting strong support for the basic principle and objectives of the programme. A number of key issues were debated, in particular the main challenges and envisaged benefits of the programme, eligibility criteria for participants, the appropriate level and recipients of programme funding, the duration of visits, and the process of selecting participants.

The issues raised during the workshop provided both confirmation of the appropriateness of the preliminary study findings and implementation scheme presented, as well as food for thought for fine-tuning the parameters of the test phase. All feedback provided was considered carefully. Where this was deemed beneficial and appropriate, the proposed implementation scheme was revised and adapted in light of the comments from stakeholders.

Further details on the stakeholder workshop, the issues that were discussed and the way in which the discussions fed into the final results of this study can be found in annex A4 to this report.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION SCHEME FOR THE PREPARATORY ACTION

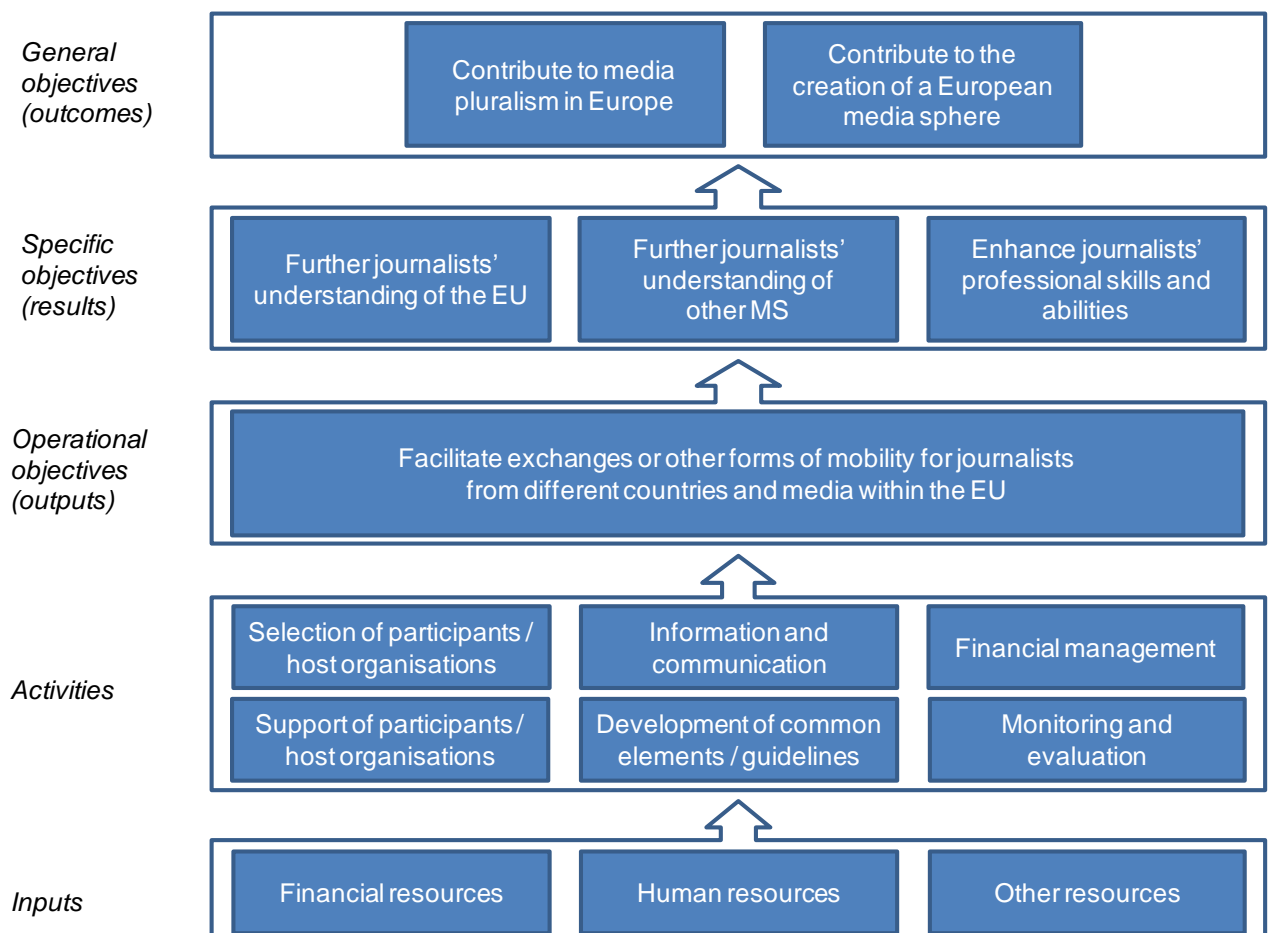
This chapter of the report presents the proposals for an implementation scheme for the test phase of the preparatory action “ERASMUS for journalists”. This takes into account and builds on the information and analysis presented in the previous sections of this report, namely the analysis of the programme’s intervention logic and the feedback from journalists and editors.

5.1 General considerations

The fieldwork has confirmed that, notwithstanding the challenges and risks that will need to be overcome, there is a considerable level of interest in an “ERASMUS for journalists” programme from both journalists and potential host organisations. This corroborates the conclusion that the programme is feasible.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the proposed implementation scheme for the test phase, it is worth recalling the wider context of the “ERASMUS for journalists” initiative, in particular the intervention logic developed in section 3 of this report. The diagram below shows the different elements of the intervention logic as defined previously.

Figure 8: “ERASMUS for journalists” programme intervention logic



The analysis concluded inter alia that the different general and specific objectives are achievable and complementary to some extent, but that the degree to which each of them would be achieved depends on the way the programme is designed and implemented. Therefore, it is important to prioritise the objectives, in order to ensure the proposed programme is based on realistic assumptions and has a specific value proposition and a unique selling point that are as clear as possible. To reiterate, the priority objectives as derived from the intervention logic analysis can be summed up as follows:³⁴

- General objectives:
 - The programme’s main desired ultimate outcome is to contribute to the creation of a European media sphere (i.e. enhanced coverage of trans-national and European affairs in the national media).
 - By doing so, the programme should also contribute to media pluralism in the EU (i.e. provide citizens with access to a variety of opinions, voices etc.).
- Specific objectives:
 - The programme’s main desired intermediate result is to further journalists’ understanding of other Member States, their media and cultures.
 - In addition, to the extent possible the programme should also further journalists’ understanding of the EU (in the more institutional sense), and enhance their journalistic skills and abilities (through peer learning).

The fieldwork has confirmed this prioritisation (in particular as regards the specific objectives) is broadly in line with the needs and interests of journalists. It is therefore maintained for the ensuing analysis, i.e. the proposed implementation scheme focuses on enabling the programme to achieve primarily the specific objective of furthering journalists’ understanding of other Member States and their media.

The following sections of this report discuss the lower levels of the intervention logic as shown above, namely the desired outputs or types of exchanges or other forms of mobility that the programme should facilitate (section 5.2), the main activities related to programme management and implementation that will be required (section 5.3), and the required financial and other inputs (section 5.4). Finally, the key risks and possible mitigation strategies are analysed (section 5.5).

The box overleaf summarises the key elements that are discussed in more detail in the following sections, and thus provides a quick overview of the optimal implementation scheme.

³⁴ For more details on these objectives, how they are interpreted, and the reasons for the proposed weighting, please refer to sections 3.2.1, 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

Table 3: Summary of key elements of the proposed preparatory action

Key element	For details see section:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is to facilitate visits of journalists to media outlets in another Member State. 	5.2.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project actively encourages, but does not require reciprocity (i.e. two-way exchanges, staged or simultaneous, between media outlets). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duration of visits: between two and six weeks 	5.2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content and objectives of visits should be kept flexible to cater to the differing needs and interests of journalists and hosts. 	5.2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both journalists who are staff members of media outlets and freelancers with a minimum of two years of experience are eligible to participate. 	5.2.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether proficiency in the language of the host organisation is necessary depends on the requirements of the host. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An intermediary organisation will manage the programme, review applications, disburse funds, and undertake information and communication activities. 	5.3.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journalists who apply for funding need to already have the agreement of a specific media organisation to host them. 	5.3.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives and tasks during the visit have to be agreed in advance between the journalist and the host organisation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the test phase, funding in the form of an advance payment will be provided to all eligible applications on a first come, first served basis. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications can be submitted and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. 	5.3.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme will cover journalists' travel and subsistence expenses (average of approx. EUR 2,300 for four weeks, depending on the cost of living in the host Member State). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective dissemination of information and awareness-raising to potential participants and hosts will be key during project start-up. 	5.3.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the evaluation of the test phase, feedback will be requested from journalists and host organisations through questionnaires. 	5.3.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expected budget for the first year of the test phase of EUR 600,000 million will enable approx. 180 visits. 	5.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key risks include a geographical imbalance and excessive bureaucracy. 	5.5

5.2 Key parameters of the exchange visits

5.2.1 Types of visits

The study team defined five different types of exchanges or other forms of mobility that an “ERASMUS for journalists” programme could potentially facilitate. The level of interest from journalists in each “prototype”, as well as their specific pros and cons, were discussed during the focus groups (see section 4.1 of this report). Based on the feedback received and the ensuing analysis, the test phase (and presumably the eventual full programme, unless the results of the test phase suggest otherwise) should offer journalists the opportunity to participate in visits accommodating elements of three of the prototypes; the other two are judged as not appropriate within the context of this initiative. The table below provides a brief description of each type.

Table 4: Key approaches: exchanges or other forms of mobility

Programme prototype	Brief description	Recommended for test phase
1. “Exchange”	In a direct one-on-one exchange, two journalists from different EU Member States and media would swap their work-places for a limited period of time. During the exchange, journalists could potentially file reports both for their host organisation and their home organisation.	Yes
2. “Mobility”	Journalists would be placed with a host organisation (media outlet) in a different Member State, but there is no direct reciprocity, i.e. it is not a necessary pre-condition that a journalist from the host media spends time at the visiting journalists’ organisation, or at any foreign media.	Yes
3. “Twinning”	The programme would facilitate twinning or pairing two journalists from two different news organisations in two different countries. Basically, each member of the pair would in turn spend some time working alongside the other in his or her country. The pairings would be based on a common interest (e.g. in a common story).	Yes
4. “Co-operation”	The idea is similar to that of “twinning”, but would support groups rather than pairs of journalists. Such a programme could inspire and support editorial projects run by groups of journalists with an interest in covering topics relevant for several EU MS. Each member would investigate the situation in their own country, and share the results of their research within the group.	No
5. “Seminars”	Seminars or workshops held in Brussels or other relevant European locations could bring together journalists from across different EU Member States to learn about specific topics, visit relevant locations or institutions, and meet interesting interlocutors. Such seminars could be combined with any of the other models to enhance the value-added.	No

Taking the different types of visits in turn, the main reasons for the selection are:

- “Mobility”: This approach, which is similar to the existing ERASMUS programme for university students, was one of the favoured scenarios of focus group participants in all

countries. Key factors that make it attractive are its flexibility and openness to a wide range of journalists, including freelancers.

- “Exchange” / “Twinning”: The key difference between these approaches and “Mobility” is the idea of reciprocity, i.e. that two media would actually swap their staff for a limited period of time. This two-way exchange was found a very interesting and potentially beneficial idea by most focus group participants as well as editors. Most tended to favour the idea of a staged “Twinning” over the simultaneous “Exchange”, as the former would allow the participating journalists to provide orientation and act as mentors for each other during their respective visits. But the need for reciprocity was also seen as restrictive and limiting in scope, since it would only allow a journalist to visit another media organisation if an appropriate counterpart can be found.
- “Co-operation”: Although a significant number of focus group participants expressed an interest in this approach, it was seen as pursuing very different objectives from an exchange or mobility programme. While it could lead to interesting stories, the level of learning about other MS and in particular their media would be minimal. In addition, there are a number of practical obstacles to the successful implementation of this approach, inter alia the need to find and pre-define common topics, the difficulty of effectively identifying suitable participants and managing co-operation between larger groups, and many journalists’ reluctance to share content and sources. Such co-operation sometimes emerges naturally when there is a common interest and sufficient trust; an EU programme would be unlikely to have a significant impact.
- “Seminars”: While there is an interest in seminars on EU-related topics, the existing offer, which includes EJC seminars and other opportunities for journalists to visit Brussels and/or the European institutions, is deemed sufficient. Although there could be an added value from specific seminars as an induction or follow-up to visits to other media (mainly because they could add an EU dimension to the visits between Member States, and facilitate networking and exchange of knowledge and experiences on a larger scale), these are outweighed by the numerous practical difficulties (including the issue of timing and location, and the challenge of finding topics that are of interest to the very diverse range of journalists that would participate in visits).

Thus, the test phase should be flexible enough to encompass the “Mobility”, “Exchange” and “Twinning” types of visits. Given that all three approaches are closely related, this should not pose major conceptual or logistical difficulties. The basic approach would be “Mobility”, allowing participating journalists to spend time at a media organisation in another EU MS. The programme should also facilitate “Exchange” and “Twinning” visits, but the element of reciprocity should not be a necessary pre-condition for participation. In other words, if pairs of journalists with an interest as well as the appropriate profile (including levels of experience, areas of expertise and language skills) to enable a two-way exchange (be it simultaneous or staged) can be found, then this is the ideal case and should be enabled and actively encouraged. But this does not preclude individual journalists from obtaining funding for visits to media organisations that are willing to host them, but cannot or do not wish to send one of their staff abroad in return.

5.2.2 Duration of visits

The optimal duration of visits / exchanges was discussed extensively in all focus groups and in the interviews with editors, as well as during the stakeholder workshop. Opinions varied widely: many

journalists (in particular younger journalists) favoured a duration of at least two to three months (if not longer), often making reference to the ERASMUS programme for university students and alleging that a relatively long period of time would be necessary to fully acclimatise, integrate and fully benefit from the learning experience. However, many other journalists (in particular more experienced ones) held the view that such a long duration would be incompatible with the professional situation of most journalists, and that a significant learning effect could be achieved during a visit of no more than a few weeks. Editors generally agreed that most media would find it very difficult to let a member of their staff leave for several months, and also tended to favour a duration of one month at the most.

Obviously, the duration of visits is also linked with the tasks to be performed by journalists during their time abroad (see below), as well as with the available funding. But generally speaking, it seems clear that visits and exchanges with a duration of more than one month would be very difficult for most working journalists to reconcile with their professional (and sometimes personal) life, and would also encounter significant resistance from most editors, few of whom would be willing to allow their staff to participate in such a programme.

On the other hand, visits that are very brief (e.g. one week) would also run into a series of problems. There is a strong argument that one week is indeed too short to allow visitors to gain a sufficiently in-depth insight into the work of the hosting organisation and country. Many potential participants and host organisations would be reluctant to make the inevitable investment in time for applying to a programme with such a short duration. At the same time, there is a risk that the programme would be used only to fund visits to other countries to cover a very specific event or story for the home media, without making much use of the possibilities offered by immersion in a host organisation.

Therefore, it is recommended that the duration of visits be set at between two and six weeks. Based on the feedback from journalists and editors, this period of time represents an appropriate balance between desirability (allowing for real learning and the potential to have direct and indirect impacts³⁵) and feasibility (in terms of compatibility with the economic and other realities of the journalistic profession). It is expected that most applications would be for visits lasting approximately one month, but defining a range of between two and six weeks provides an element of flexibility to include different personal and professional circumstances, interests, and journalistic projects. This duration is similar to that of several existing journalist exchange programmes,³⁶ suggesting that it is in line with common practice.

This is not to say that there could not be a significant level of interest in longer visits. In fact, several participants in the stakeholder workshop felt the duration of visits should be more flexible. However, keeping the duration of visits relatively short not only reduces the cost (and thus offers more journalists the opportunity to benefit from funding during the test phase), but also makes it clear that the focus is on working visits seeking to achieve a specific journalistic objective, rather than on more general cultural learning. A maximum duration of six weeks is consistent with this focus. Nonetheless, if the experience of the test phase were to show a high level of interest in (and significant additional benefits from) longer visits, it could be considered in the future whether the maximum duration of visits should be extended to eight or ten weeks.

³⁵ Direct impacts could include concrete journalistic pieces produced and published during or immediately after the visits. Indirect (longer-term) impacts could include more and better coverage of the visited MS as a result of knowledge gathered and networks created during the visit. It should be noted that this effect could work in both directions, i.e. the contact with the visiting journalist could also enhance the coverage of this journalists' country in the hosting media.

³⁶ Including the International Journalism Exchange, the German project “Nahaufnahme”, and the EJC-sponsored visits of EU journalists to Japan and Korea.

5.2.3 Journalistic tasks and themes

Another key question is: what are journalists expected to do during their visit abroad? Should they work primarily for the host organisation or for their own home organisation? And should the visit be arranged with a specific topic and/or journalistic output in mind (and if so, should this be directly or at least indirectly related to EU policies or institutions?), or can it be left flexible, leaving it for journalists and hosts to decide how to spend their time once they have made contact? These questions attracted much debate during the fieldwork, and no consensus emerged among journalists or editors. However, one key message that came through very clearly is that, in order to accommodate a wide range of situations, circumstances and expectations, the programme should provide a maximum amount of flexibility for journalists and host organisations to define and agree the exact objectives, content and tasks to be carried out during the visit between themselves.

Regarding which organisation journalists should work for, the main arguments in favour of continuing to file articles primarily for the home organisation even during the stay abroad are that it would ease the burden on the sending organisation (since it would not completely lose a member of staff), and that it is obviously much easier for journalists to work in their own language. However, in many situations or environments it seems unlikely that there would be demand for a steady stream of articles about the visited country in the journalist's home media over a period of several weeks. Perhaps more importantly, the integration in and learning from the host media would obviously be enhanced if the visiting journalist were actually working for the host organisation. It is also likely that media organisations would be much more willing to invest time and effort into hosting a foreign journalist and providing proper mentoring if that journalist is expected to make a contribution to their media.

Therefore, the basic premise should be that, unless both sides agree otherwise, visiting journalists will work primarily for host organisations during their visit and be at their disposal for the duration of his or her stay. Given the language constraints that most participants will face, the visitors' contribution to the host media will not necessarily take the form of a large number of articles or other journalistic pieces. Nonetheless, there are numerous other ways in which visitors could add value, including research and investigation, attending events or press conferences, shadowing / supporting colleagues and sharing their own knowledge and expertise, producing specific journalistic pieces or parts thereof (even if these need to be edited by a native speaker), etc. The relatively short duration of the visits (see above) means that their regular employers should be able to cope with the journalists' absence. At the same time, the fact that they are expected to work primarily for the host organisations does not preclude journalists from filing occasional articles with their home organisation, and/or from collecting information that can be turned into a journalistic output after they return to their posts.

Another question is whether the content of the visit, i.e. a particular topic that will be the focus of the visiting journalist's work (be it a specific story or a specific journalistic or editorial technique or skill), should be defined in advance. On the one hand, what was stated in the analysis of uncertainties, constraints and critical conditions in section 3 of this report remains true: the level of interest from many journalists, sending organisations and host organisations will be higher if there is a concrete journalistic interest to be catered to or project to be implemented. At the same time, the fieldwork has also revealed that this is not necessarily true for all journalists and media, and that, depending on the individual, country and media in question, a visit that is meant to establish networks and learn “whatever there is to learn” can also be seen as valuable and interesting (particularly in the case of countries and media that are perceived as more advanced). There was

also a fairly widespread feeling among journalists that by being too restrictive and trying to define topics in advance, one might stifle spontaneous and open mutual learning and exchange of knowledge. It was also noted in the fieldwork that editors would be unlikely to agree to publish or air a story on a given topic long in advance.

It therefore seems most appropriate to leave it to visiting journalists and their respective host organisations to define and agree the main objectives of the visit in advance. This could be the production of a concrete journalistic piece, learning about a specific skill, process or editorial technique, acquire knowledge about a specific topic (which may or may not be directly related to EU policies or institutions), or more generally to facilitate mutual learning between the visitor and the host. These objectives should be specified in the joint application for funding (see section 5.3 below for more details on the application and matching process). The main tasks and activities the visiting journalist is expected to carry out in order to achieve these objectives should also be listed. However, applicants should have the freedom to define the objectives and tasks freely and in accordance with their specific needs. Because needs, interests and skills vary significantly between journalists with different backgrounds, and working for different media in different countries, it would not be realistic to pre-define concrete objectives, themes or tasks centrally.

5.2.4 Eligibility criteria

In principle, it seems clear that the programme should be open to all journalists. However, defining who is and who is not a “journalist” is less clear-cut than one might imagine. As noted in a recent report by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), in different countries there is a “wide variety of systems and traditions relating to the definition of journalism”. Some countries rely on accreditation, others on membership in a professional governing body or a union. Given that these criteria vary from Member State to Member State, accreditation or membership of a professional association or union is not a useful eligibility criterion for an ERASMUS for journalists programme.

Instead, a more open and flexible definition that can be applied across countries is required. In its report, the IFJ emphasises the importance of five factors, namely (1) regular and professional activity, (2) ethical commitment, (3) ethical exercise, (4) skill, and (5) membership of a *formal or informal* professional community. For the purpose of the programme, the first and last of these criteria are particularly relevant; the others can be assumed to be fulfilled if the journalist works regularly and professionally for a recognised news media outlet. Regarding the fifth factor, the IFJ emphasises that this criterion is fulfilled “when there is a formal (staff) or informal (freelancers) link to a professional community such as a media newsroom.”³⁷ Thus, for the purpose of the test phase, a journalist is defined as follows:

"One whose occupation is to write (or in the case of broadcast media, otherwise report) for any public or private news media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, or internet) based in a Member State of the EU; also, an editorial or other professional writer for a periodical."

This definition includes freelancers; the only difference is the fact that they work independently and often for several media. The fieldwork has highlighted the need to make the programme open to freelance journalists, who in many countries make up a significant (and growing) segment of the workforce. In order not to exclude this large target population, it is crucial that the programme

³⁷ IFJ: Journalism Unions in Touch with the Future, Brussels 2010, pp. 23-27. Available at: <http://congress.ifj.org/assets/docs/131/026/f757f83-48b2e1a.pdf>

does not require all participants to have a *formal* relationship with a single employer. In order to prove their eligibility, applicants would have to provide a CV and a letter from the editor of (one of) the news media they work for.

On the other hand, a pure blogger has neither a *formal* nor an *informal* link to a professional journalistic community, and therefore should not be considered a journalist. Unlike journalists who work for a media outlet, bloggers are not required to agree to a code of ethics and carefully check their sources, and as a result, the information on blogs can sometimes be incomplete and unreliable.

Unemployed journalists would not be eligible, unless they continue to produce published journalistic content at least sporadically (and can provide a letter from an editor testifying this and endorsing the visit). Although some participants in the stakeholder workshop pointed out that journalists who are out of work could benefit greatly from the experience they would gain during a visit to a news media abroad, there is a risk that their inclusion would detract from the programme’s focus on working visits (rather than training or study visits), and could weaken the appeal of the programme for host organisations. Thus, journalists who are completely out of work are ineligible, while those who may have lost their full-time job, but continue to be active to some extent should generally be able to meet the eligibility criteria.

There are a few other factors that need to be taken into account when deciding who is eligible to participate in the programme:

- **Age:** While the programme would appeal primarily to younger journalists, an age restriction therefore appears unnecessary, given that there is no reason why older journalists should not be able to benefit from a visit to a media in another Member State. In any case, anti-discrimination laws would make it very difficult to exclude older potential participants.
- **Experience:** There is a strong case to require participants to have a certain minimum level of previous work experience. The programme should not be seen as another internship programme, but cater to journalists who are experienced enough to fully understand and subsequently make use of what they learn, experience and observe during their stay abroad. They should be in a position to use and apply this after they return home, leading to an impact in terms of publishing journalistic pieces. At the same time, the skills, experience and networks of visiting journalists, and their ability to share these, are also an important incentive for host organisations. Therefore, a minimum of two years of journalistic work experience (or the equivalent thereof) is required. This does not have to be continuous or full-time work, but applicants’ CVs should show that during their professional career (i.e. since obtaining their first university degree or similar), they have exercised and earned at least part of their income as journalists during a period or periods of time totalling at least two years.
- **Language:** The interviews with editors show that most host organisations will require visiting journalists to have at least an intermediate level of proficiency in the language of the country in question, so that they are able to follow and participate in day-to-day activities, meetings, events etc. However, there may also be instances where media are willing to host journalists who do not speak the language (especially in the case of media in small countries where English or another major language is widely spoken). There is no reason to exclude such visits, but the previous agreement of the host organisation is crucial. Language skills should therefore not feature among the eligibility criteria, but the guidance for both journalists and hosts should make it clear that this issue should be considered carefully in their planning the visit.

As for the eligibility criteria for host organisations, this could be identical to the relevant part of the definition above, namely “any public or private news media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, or internet) based in a Member State of the EU.” (Or did we lose a piece of text here that was supposed to be included?)

5.3 Project management

As depicted in the intervention logic, there are a number of activities that will have to be carried out to manage the project. This section is dedicated to outlining the proposed key activities, mechanisms and processes to enable the test phase of the preparatory action to effectively and efficiently facilitate the types of visits described above.

5.3.1 Role of the intermediary organisation

The test phase could either be run by the European Commission itself, or by one or more intermediary organisations. Each of these approaches would have specific advantages and disadvantages, as outlined in the boxes below.

Figure 9: Approaches to project management

Option 1: Direct management by the European Commission
<p>The European Commission (most likely DG INFSO) manages all aspects of the test phase, including the selection of participants and disbursement of funding.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct control for the Commission over all aspects related to the project • Minimises the budgetary cost of outsourcing project management <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct management by the Commission could be seen to impinge on the journalistic independence of the programme and its participants • Unclear whether the Commission by itself is best placed to undertake effective promotion of the project • Unclear if and under what circumstances Financial Regulations allow for direct Commission grants to individuals
Option 2: One intermediary organisation
<p>The European Commission appoints a single contractor to act as intermediary organisation (IO) for the test phase. The IO is responsible for all direct contact with project participants and beneficiaries; it disseminates information, invites and reviews applications, disburses funding, and undertakes all other tasks required to ensure the project objectives are met.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IO’s knowledge of and contacts within the journalism sector (and/or other exchange programmes) would facilitate project implementation and promotion • Hands-off approach by the Commission guarantees journalistic independence • Reduced workload for the Commission

Cons:

- Financial cost of outsourcing project management
- Single IO may not be able to cover all of Europe equally well

Option 3: Several intermediary organisations

The European Commission appoints several organisations to act as intermediary organisations (IOs) for the test phase. Ideally, there will be one IO per Member State. Each of these will be responsible for interacting with participants and managing aspects related to outgoing and incoming visits to/from their respective Member States. One IO would have to play a co-ordinating role and be responsible for managing the relationship with and reporting to the Commission.

Pros:

- Wide network of relevant contacts through IOs in each Member State
- Presence in each Member State ensures knowledge of local legal and other relevant aspects
- Enables communication with (potential) applicants in all EU languages

Cons:

- Large number of actors would make processes and co-ordination unwieldy and potentially more costly, particularly in view of the envisaged limited duration and budget of the test phase
- Unclear whether appropriate, politically neutral journalist organisations exist in each Member State

Given the nature and scope of the project, and the balance of the pros and cons outlined above, it seems most appropriate for the Commission to select a single intermediary organisation to centrally run the test phase. The key tasks of this organisation will be to:

- Invite, review and select applications to participate in the preparatory action;
- Disburse funding to individual participants, monitor overall spending levels, prepare financial reports for the Commission, and other tasks linked with financial execution and management;
- Disseminate information about the programme among the relevant target audiences, including (but not limited to) a project website and promotional material aimed at editors and journalists;
- Develop (in collaboration with the Commission) project manuals, guidelines, application forms, templates for follow-up, and other relevant materials;
- Any other tasks directly related to project management, information and communication, liaison with the Commission and stakeholders, data collection for evaluation and monitoring, etc.

The intermediary organisation should be selected through a Call for Tender or Call for Proposals (the exact legal and administrative implications of these two options in accordance with the relevant financial regulation will need to be analysed). Key criteria that the successful organisation should meet include:

- In-depth knowledge of the journalism sector and good network of contacts among European media organisations;
- Proven ability to administer exchange and/or scholarship programmes;
- Organisational, operational and financial independence from the media corporations, national governments and the EU.

Some of the main tasks of the intermediary organisation and how they could be organised are discussed in the following sections. A manual describing the prerequisites, role and tasks of the intermediary organisation in more concrete terms is included as annex B1 to this report.

5.3.2 Application and selection process

There are two main ways in which the application and selection process of programme participants and host organisations, and the matching of journalists to host media, could potentially be organised.

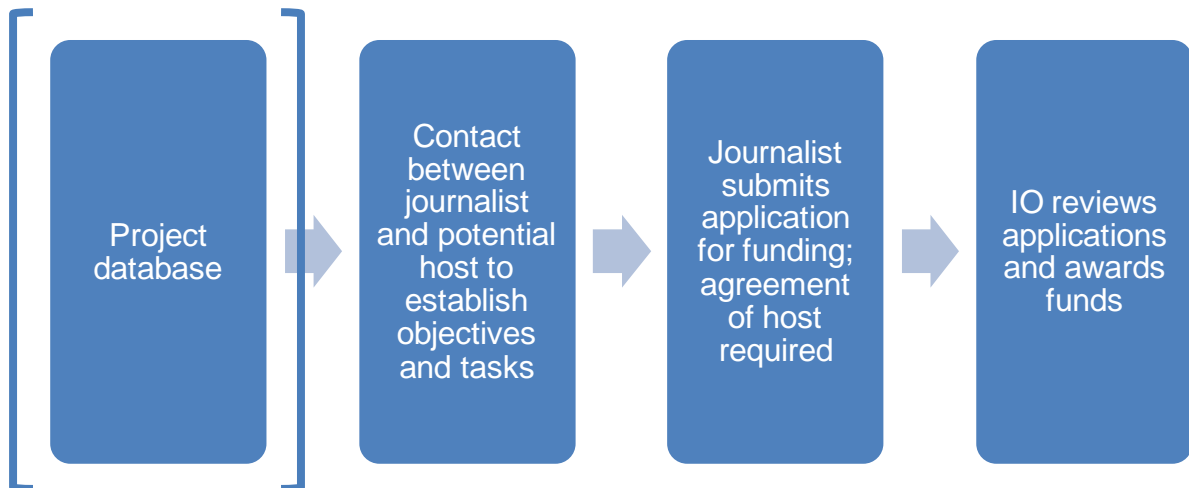
Figure 10: Approaches to application

Option 1: Centralised approach
<p>Journalists apply to the programme in general. The intermediary organisation selects the best candidates, and is charged with finding a placement for them with an appropriate host organisation.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater control over recruitment of host media • Potential for effective matching of host media with participating journalists <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very difficult for any intermediary organisation to have access to information on a sufficiently wide range of potential host organisations from across the EU • Process would be very resource-intensive and time-consuming for a relatively large-scale programme
Option 2: De-centralised approach
<p>Journalists apply for funding for a visit to a specific host organisation that they have identified (and reached agreement with) themselves. The intermediary organisation reviews applications, and awards funding if certain criteria are met.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater control for both participating journalists to select host media that meet their needs and interests (and vice versa) • Greater flexibility with a view to the timing of the visits • Much less resource-intensive for the intermediary organisation <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies heavily on the initiative of interested journalists • Risk that certain well-known / prestigious media outlets will be over-subscribed

The preferred approach for the ERASMUS for journalists programme is the de-centralised approach. The fieldwork has shown how important it is for both journalists and potential host organisations that the matching reflects their specific needs and interests (including language considerations and topics of interest). It therefore seems much more appropriate for journalists to identify potential hosts themselves, and for those media to have a direct say in who they would like to host. Timing is another key issue: those existing programmes that centrally match journalists to host media generally do so only once or a few times a year, whereas the ideal situation for the initiative discussed in this report would be to keep the timing flexible, and allow

visitors and hosts to agree on the point in time that suits them best for the visit. Finally, for a programme intent on facilitating hundreds of visits per year, the centralised approach (which works well for smaller-scale programmes focused on only one or a few countries) would be too resource-intensive and time-consuming to implement.

Figure 11: Proposed application process: De-centralised approach



The diagram above depicts the main steps in the de-centralised application process. Further details on each step are provided below:

- A project database of potentially interested host organisations should be set up, allowing potential applicants to search for appropriate placements. However, it should be noted that in the early stages of the project, the database will be unlikely to contain very many entries; it will only gradually be populated as more media organisations become aware of the programme and express an interest in participating. Initially, the programme will rely heavily on journalists’ own initiative to contact media that they are interested in visiting; the database will only gradually develop into a widely used tool as the programme gains traction.
- Journalists who are interested in participating contact the media they would like to visit (whether they are contained in the database or not) to discuss directly whether they would be willing to host them. At this point, editors should also be made aware (or reminded) of the possibility to arrange a reciprocal exchange (or “twinning”), inter alia through communication material aimed specifically at potential host organisations. If there is a mutual interest, the journalist drafts a short summary of the objectives of the visit and the tasks to be performed and sends this to the editor of the host organisation, who may propose changes or additions as he or she sees fit.
- If both sides agree, the journalist submits an application for funding to the intermediary organisation (for draft forms and templates see annex B3). The application should be accompanied by:
 - A completed template specifying the duration and objectives of the visit, and listing the main tasks to be undertaken by the journalist during the visit. This form has to be signed by both the applicant and the host organisation. It includes a declaration

committing both sides to a number of basic principles. Some of these commitments are of a practical nature (such as to obtain adequate insurance cover, or to submit the required evidence and documentation following the visit), while others relate more to professional conduct and the commitment to the objectives of the visit.

- The applicant’s CV.
- A letter from his or her editor confirming that the journalist works for his or her media (be it as a member of staff or a freelancer), and expressing support for the visit.

Within the de-centralised approach to application, there are two main ways in which the selection of applicants could be handled: either through a competitive selection process, or on a first come, first served basis. The main advantages and disadvantages of both approaches are outlined in the box below.

Figure 12: Approaches to candidate selection

Option 1: Competitive selection
<p>The intermediary organisation reviews the applications and checks whether the formal requirements are met (see below). All those applications that pass this hurdle are submitted to a selection committee, which compares the relative worth and merit of applications and awards funding to the best ones. The selection committee could consist of three to seven media experts who are appointed for a term of one to two years. These experts should come from different Member States, and represent a mix of academia (e.g. professors from renowned journalism schools) and representatives of journalists as well as media organisations and/or publishers. The initial appointments would have to be made by the Commission and/or the intermediary organisation; once set up, the committee itself could play a role in selecting replacements for outgoing members. The selection committee could be assisted by a key staff member of the intermediary organisation and a Commission official (in an advisory capacity, without vote).</p> <p>The committee would score the relative merit of applications, using a pre-defined set of award criteria. These criteria should refer primarily to the concrete objectives of and tasks to be carried out during the visit. The selection committee should consider (1) whether these objectives and tasks have been defined in the application with the required degree of specificity; (2) the extent to which the objectives of the visit are in line with the programme’s objectives (in particular whether the applicant is interested in learning about and eventually reporting on the host country or specific aspects related to it, as opposed to “only” enhancing his or her own journalistic skills); and (3) the general credibility of the application, objectives and tasks, taking into account the applicant’s CV and the profile of the proposed host organisation.</p> <p>The level of experience of applicants and the strength of their CVs should not be a factor in the decision making process (as long as the basic requirements are met). Less experienced journalists who have not had much previous international exposure are as much part of the target group as senior editors.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that individual visits are in line with the programme objectives • Greater control over the allocation of funding <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the number of applications received, the selection process could be resource-intensive and time-consuming • Ensuring the transparency and fairness of the selection process could be a challenge

Option 2: First come, first served

The intermediary organisation reviews the applications and checks only whether the formal requirements are met. These are: correctly completed application form (including specification of the objectives and tasks to be carried out during the visit); proof that the applicant has the necessary level of experience; a letter of endorsement from the editor of a recognised media outlet based in an EU Member State (home media); and agreement of the editor of a recognised media outlet in another EU Member State (host media).

Eligible applicants are awarded funding on a first come, first served basis. In order to make the process traceable and transparent, applicants need to receive confirmation when submitting their application, including the exact date and time it was received, and an application number. This would require an electronic submission system that automatically sends such a confirmation. A list with the numbers (but not the names, due to potential data protection concerns) of successful applications will have to be published. Applicants that are rejected because they do not meet the formal requirements will also need to be informed of the grounds for the decision.

Pros:

- Simple process that does not require a decision based on criteria that could be perceived as subjective
- Less time and resource intensive process will lead to faster decisions and award of funding

Cons:

- Little control over whether applications are in line with the programme’s objectives
- Could lead to higher quality applications not receiving funding if they are received late

Given the exploratory nature of the preparatory action (during which it will be important to experiment with different candidate profiles and types of visits, even if at first sight they may not seem to be 100% consistent with the pre-defined objectives), the limited financial envelope and duration of the test phase, and the importance of a streamlined process that minimises administrative burdens and is able to reach decisions quickly, it is proposed that funding is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis (rather than competitively). All applications that are deemed eligible should receive funding, until the amount initially allocated for the test phase is used up.

Based on the experience during the test phase, the approach could be re-considered for a possible full-scale programme in the future. At that point, it could also be considered to set aside quota for specific target groups to ensure the programme reaches the desired balance. As such, preference could be afforded to applicants from or wanting to visit certain media types (e.g. local or regional publications; radio or internet media); specific Member States that are otherwise under-represented; or specific gender or age groups. A further option would be to build factors into the selection process to favour certain types of visits. For example, it is clear that certain Member States (often neighbours) have a far greater presence in other Member States’ media than others.³⁸ In order to achieve maximum benefits with a view to fostering the creation of a truly pan-European media sphere, the programme could afford priority to visits between countries that do not have very close ties already. This could be achieved by awarding extra points to applicants from “peripheral” Member States, or visits to such Member States, or by applying a corrective coefficient to reflect the level of mutual media coverage between the two countries.

³⁸ More information on the current level of coverage will become available through the media monitoring exercise that is currently being conducted under Part 2 of this study (statistical review). Results are expected to be available in early 2011.

For the duration of the test phase, and while the first come, first served approach is used, a relatively simple system should be put in place to avoid a situation where, for whatever reason, certain Member States benefit disproportionately. In order to ensure that the funds are adequately spread across different EU Member States, limits should be set regarding the maximum number of visits to and from individual Member States. Depending on the number of visits that are envisaged, it is proposed that no more than 20% of these should be to or from any single country. If a total of 180 visits are envisaged (see section 5.4 below), then no more than 36 Spanish journalists’ visits to media abroad, and no more than 36 visits by journalists from other MS to Spanish media, would be supported. When either of these limits has been reached, no further applications from Spanish journalists or to visit Spanish media would be considered.

A further question is how often application and selection processes should be organised. The fieldwork has shown that a sufficient amount of flexibility in terms of timing is key. Journalism is a dynamic activity that responds to emerging priorities and developing stories. Therefore, the attractiveness of a programme that only accepts applications and awards funding once per year would be severely reduced, as journalists and media will often be unable to plan that far in advance. On the other hand, very frequent (e.g. monthly) application and selection rounds would place an undue burden on the intermediary organisation, and would also make the effective communication of the respective deadlines and award decisions difficult. Therefore, the main options are either quarterly or bi-annual application and selection processes.

Figure 13: Timing of application and selection processes

Option 1: Quarterly
<p>Applications are invited four times per year (i.e. at the end of three-monthly intervals). The intermediary organisation reviews the applications and checks whether the formal requirements are met (in line with the first come, first served approach described above). During each round, it awards funding for up to a quarter of the total number of visits for which a budget is available, and informs applicants accordingly within one month of the application deadline.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides flexibility for applicants to arrange the timing of their visits and apply with short notice • As the preparatory action gains traction and awareness among the target audiences increases, journalists would still have more chances to apply later in the year • Allows adjustment to be made in subsequent application rounds (e.g. if there was a geographical or other type of imbalance in earlier rounds) <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly higher cost of organising four application and selection rounds
Option 2: Bi-annual
<p>Applications are invited twice per year (i.e. at the end of six-monthly intervals). The intermediary organisation reviews the applications and checks whether the formal requirements are met (in line with the first come, first served approach described above). During each round, it awards funding for up to half of the total number of visits for which a budget is available, and informs applicants accordingly within one month of the application deadline.</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly lower cost of organising only two application and selection rounds <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires participants to plan their visits longer in advance (e.g. if applications were invited by 1 April and 1 October, a journalist wishing to visit a media in another Member State in September would have to apply in March – a full six months ahead of the envisaged date for the visit) • Fewer possibilities to make adjustments in subsequent application and selection rounds

Given that the higher cost (mainly in terms of time spent to communicate the application deadlines and for reviewing applications) for the more frequent application and selection rounds would be relatively minor, it is proposed that applications should be invited on a quarterly basis. The benefits of this option would seem to far outweigh the additional costs. In any case, the decision should be taken and communicated to the applicants within no more than one month of the application deadline, in order to ensure visits can be arranged and implemented in a reasonably timely manner.

5.3.3 Financial management

Similarly to other mobility / exchange programmes, the ERASMUS for journalists programme should cover the extra costs that participating journalists incur by going abroad, namely international travel to their destination and subsistence expenses, which include accommodation, meals, local travel, insurance, etc. Regarding insurance, stakeholders at the workshop emphasised that this is an important element that must not be overlooked; it should not be taken for granted that all participants are automatically covered against all relevant risks during their stay abroad. At the same time, the different legal situations in different Member States, as well as the different circumstances of different journalists (e.g. permanently employed vs freelance journalists) mean that a one-size-fits-all solution, whereby the programme would provide a standard insurance coverage for participants, is impractical. Instead, all participants will need to be informed that it is their responsibility to take out the necessary (health, accident, indemnity etc.) insurance, and provide their hosts with proof of this if requested.

The envisaged financial support should allow participants to pay for all the expenses incurred directly due to the stay, so that this does not require a significant financial investment from participants themselves. In this context, it is important to note that some participants will be permanently employed by a media outlet in their home country, but a significant number will almost certainly be freelancers. The economic situation of freelancers is generally more precarious, and this could be exacerbated during the programme: while most permanently employed journalists should be able to continue to draw a regular salary (although some may need to request unpaid leave), freelance journalists will generally see their ability to generate income from their regular customers reduced during their stay abroad.

There have been suggestions (inter alia from participants at the stakeholder workshop) to compensate freelance participants for this disadvantage by providing them with a higher level of financial support. However, this approach risks creating a complicated and not entirely transparent system for the allocation of funding that could be subject to abuse, and may not always lead to fair results (given the very different specific circumstances of freelance journalists who work in different countries and for different types of media). Furthermore, the economic disadvantage of freelance journalists is to some extent offset by the greater flexibility their situation affords them; many freelancers may well find it easier to participate in the programme than their permanently employed counterparts, given that they tend to depend less on the permission of their superiors. Therefore, for the sake of simplicity and coherence, the level of financial support should be equal for all participants, irrespective of their professional situation.

The maximum subsistence rates under the Lifelong Learning Programme’s (LLP) “Mobility” strand are shown in the table below. Depending on the hosting country, they range from approx.

EUR 170 to EUR 85 per day during the first two weeks. The additional funding available for longer stays is disbursed at a lower rate, primarily because it is understood that participants may be able to switch from hotels to less expensive forms of accommodation during a longer stay. These rates appear appropriate in the context of the proposed ERASMUS for journalists programme, and it is therefore recommended they be used for this purpose.

Table 5: Proposed subsistence rates per host country and duration of stay³⁹

Category	Countries	Subsistence rates (EUR)	
		First two weeks	Each additional week (wks 3-6)
Group 1	(Norway)	2,450	280
Group 2	Denmark	2,352	269
Group 3	United Kingdom, (Liechtenstein)	2,156	246
Group 4	Ireland, Finland	2,058	235
Group 5	France, Sweden	1,960	224
Group 6	Italy, Netherlands, Austria	1,862	213
Group 7	Spain	1,764	202
Group 8	Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, (Iceland)	1,666	190
Group 9	Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia	1,568	179
Group 10	Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia	1,470	168
Group 11	(Turkey)	1,372	157
Group 12	Lithuania, Romania	1,274	146
Group 13	Bulgaria	1,176	134
Average weighted by population size (EU MS only)		1,785	204
Median (EU MS only)		1,666	190

It should be noted that the subsistence rates used for the ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs programme are significantly lower than those stated above (ranging from EUR 1,100 to EUR 560 per month). This is primarily a result of the fact that the feasibility study found that the majority of both young entrepreneurs and host entrepreneurs would be willing to contribute towards the financing of the programme, including by providing board and lodgings or even a small salary. The situation is very different for journalists: although several journalists who participated in the focus groups expressed their willingness to make certain sacrifices, it seems illusory to expect host organisations to take on any financial burdens. Therefore, a higher subsistence allowance will be required.

Furthermore, in the ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs programme, the funding is also disbursed as an advance payment, but participants are subsequently required to provide proof of the actual expenditure; if this is lower than the financial support received, the difference has to be paid back. In the case of the ERASMUS for journalists programme, this procedure would be likely to result in a significant administrative burden for both participants and the intermediary organisation, particularly since the relatively higher amounts would mean that bills would have to be collected and submitted not only for larger items such as accommodation, but also for smaller

³⁹ Based on DG EAC LLP Guide 2010 Part I, p. 31. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call10/part1_en.pdf

items such as food. Therefore, if the relevant financial regulations allow for it, it would seem most appropriate to award funding in advance and request participants to only submit proof that they actually undertook the visit during the period indicated, and not proof of individual expenses incurred. In order to minimise the amount of bureaucracy even further, it could be considered whether travel costs could also be considered to be included in the rates listed above.

In terms of procedures, it is thus proposed that the intermediary organisation disburse the agreed level of funding as an advance payment directly to journalists whose applications have been accepted. Journalists would have to agree in advance to submit relevant information (including proof that the visit took place, and a follow-up form specifying the outcomes and achievement of objectives, as well as copies of any articles or journalistic pieces published during or as a result of their participation in the programme) to the intermediary organisation within no more than one month after the visit has been finalised. If this obligation is not met, the funds already disbursed can be retrieved.

It is not necessary to compensate host media for their efforts. Financial compensation was not seen as an important benefit by the interviewed editors, who instead emphasised the potential benefits of mutual learning, networking and exchange of experience that comes with hosting a foreign journalist. In addition, offering funding to host media may attract the wrong kind of hosts (those interested primarily in the financial gain), which would almost inevitably detract from the visiting journalists' experience. Moreover, among respected media organisations, many adhere to impartiality codes that would prevent them from directly receiving payment for their involvement.

The same is true to some extent for sending media. Some stakeholders have argued that sending media should be compensated, and that especially smaller media outlets may find it difficult to cope without a member of their staff for a prolonged period of time. The burden could be alleviated if the programme made a financial contribution to their outlay, e.g. by covering (part of) the participants' salary during the time that they are abroad. However, such a proposition would run into several problems. For one, the Commission is unlikely to be willing to be seen to provide direct budgetary support to media organisations, or pay journalists' salaries. In addition, it would be difficult to establish objective criteria as to which organisations should be compensated; as noted above, some are clearly not in a position to accept such payments. The extent to which journalists are still able to contribute to the work of their home media during their stay abroad will also vary, further complicating the question of if and how specific media could or should be supported. In view of these difficulties, financial support for sending media should be ruled out categorically. In this way, journalists who work for media that would be unable to cope financially would still have the option of requesting unpaid leave for the duration of their visit to a media outlet in another Member State.

5.3.4 Information and communication

A key element of the test phase, and a key function to be carried out by the intermediary organisation in collaboration with the European Commission, will be the dissemination of information to stakeholders, in particular to potential and actual participants and host media organisations, so as to raise awareness of the project and encourage participation. Once the database for journalists and host organisations has reached a critical mass, the programme is likely to be nearly self-sustaining from an information and communication point of view. However, in the run-up to the project's launch some promotional activity will need to be carried out.

Additionally, a website will need to be developed, which will provide the backbone of external contact with the programme.

At the launch of the pilot phase, when the project is new and unknown to the target audiences, information and communication will be crucial to the success of the project. It is foreseen that the intermediary organisation will be responsible for much of this, with a view to raising awareness and encouraging participation in the programme. These activities will have to be proportionate to the scale of the test phase, which is expected to have a duration of twelve months and a total budget of EUR 600,000 (see section 5.4 below). Given the budgetary constraints (and the resulting limits to the number of visits that can be funded during the test phase), a costly promotional campaign in excess of the activities proposed below does not appear feasible or desirable. However, if the pilot is successful and extended to a full programme, it will be worth reconsidering the emphasis that should be placed on promotion. The following paragraphs list the minimum communication activities that should be carried out. The intermediary organisation should be encouraged to go beyond these activities, and also make use of any formal or informal networks that it is a part of to disseminate information on the programme as widely as possible. For more details regarding the specific content of / requirements for each of the activities listed below, please see annex B2.

- Stakeholder workshop: As noted previously, a stakeholder workshop was carried out during the feasibility study in order to give interested organisations and individuals the chance to provide input and thereby shape the pilot programme. This workshop also served a preliminary promotional function by alerting relevant stakeholders to the programme’s existence and imminent launch.
- Press conference and press release: A press conference should be hosted and an accompanying press release produced to coincide with the programme’s launch. This will seek both to inform as many journalists as possible about the programme, and to generate wider interest through achieving some coverage of the programme in the media. It is foreseen that the press conference would be held in Brussels, with invitations sent to the Brussels press corps. European Commissioner for Digital Media Neelie Kroes and MEP Paul Rübig, in addition to the director of the intermediary organisation, would be expected to speak and take questions from journalists. This would demonstrate political support for the programme, lending it credibility and creating a high profile for the launch. In addition to giving a basic overview of the programme, the press conference should emphasise that the programme will not impinge on journalistic independence. The press release would convey the same messages expressed at the press conference and should be sent out both by the intermediary organisation, which is expected to have a large network of press contacts, and the Commission.
- Project website: The project website will be the main communication tool. It will provide all necessary information about the project, including links to a user’s guide and application forms. In addition, the website will incorporate a match-making database of potential host organisations, where media outlets can register their interest and willingness to host a journalist from another MS, as well as specify the profile they are looking for (in terms of some parameters such as language skills, countries of origin, specific skills and experience levels, etc.). The home page of the website will be translated into all EU languages to help journalists from around the EU find out about the programme. However, in light of the limited budget available for the website, high associated costs of translation and the fact that prospective participants in the programme are expected to have considerable language skills, the detailed parts of the website will only be available in English.

- **Promotional leaflet and direct mailing:** In the run up to the launch of the programme it will be important to generate interest in the programme across a wide group of relevant stakeholders. To raise awareness of the programme and provide interested parties with a reference and first point of contact, a promotional leaflet will be designed and produced, then sent to relevant stakeholders. These would include journalism and media umbrella organisations in addition to media outlets around Europe. It is expected that for most recipients, the leaflet will be the first point of contact with the programme. It therefore will need to be professionally designed to a high standard. The leaflet will provide basic information about the programme, encouraging interested parties to visit the programme website for more information. The leaflet will present the programme as a prestigious and useful opportunity that is funded by the European Commission but that seeks to maintain journalistic independence for all participants and is not overly bureaucratic.

In the longer term, an additional communication tool could be an alumni network of project participants. This idea was strongly supported by participants in the stakeholder workshop. An alumni network could not only raise awareness of the programme, but also provide additional benefits to former participants by linking them with each other, allowing for further networking and exchange of experiences. In order to foster the network character, a website and periodic events could be organised. Given the uncertain future of the ERASMUS for journalists initiative beyond the pilot stage, it does not appear justified to invest significant resources into the creation or facilitation of such a network immediately. However, this possibility should be considered after the first or second year of the test phase, when it becomes clearer whether the initiative will be continued. For this purpose, contact details should be stored for all participants in the preparatory action.

5.3.5 Evaluation method

This section provides an overview of the proposed methodology for the evaluation of the test phase of the “Erasmus for journalists” preparatory action, and briefly explores possibilities to evaluate a possible future full programme. The evaluation framework outlined below is based on the assumption that the evaluation will be carried out internally (either by the Intermediary Organisation or DG INFSO) due to the short time frame and limited scope of the test phase. Please refer to annex B4 for the complete set of indicators and more details of the evaluation methodology.

Evaluation areas & indicators

In order to measure the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the “ERASMUS for journalists” preparatory action, a series of indicators in four evaluation areas have been defined. The first three areas are meant to assess the extent to which the project’s general, specific, and operational objectives have been achieved. The fourth and final area relates to practical issues, and is meant primarily to assess to what extent the concrete programme parameters are conducive to achieving the desired results in the most effective and efficient way.

- **General objectives:** the general objectives relate to the ultimate impacts of the programme (namely its contribution to the creation of a European media sphere, and to enhancing media pluralism). It needs to be noted that these impacts will take time to develop and a significant

impact (given the size of the test phase in comparison to the size of the media landscape) is unlikely to be measurable.

- Contributing to the creation of a European media sphere: in the short term, it will not be possible to measure any impact of the test phase on the coverage of European issues in the media. The only realistic possibility to measure impacts will be to undertake a partial assessment by counting the number of journalistic articles on pan-European issues that have been produced as a direct consequence of the exchange visits, and to ask participants to assess to what extent the project has enhanced their *ability* to report on issues related to the EU or other Member States.
- Contributing to media pluralism: objectively measuring the test phase’s (or full programme’s) impact appears impossible as (1) the project does not address the key issue of media ownership, and can therefore only be expected to make a small contribution to media pluralism; and (2) media pluralism is notoriously difficult to measure objectively, as confirmed by a recent independent study.⁴⁰ Therefore, the best the evaluation can aspire to is to ask participants whether the visit has raised their awareness of the importance of / shortcomings in the area of media pluralism.
- **Specific objectives:** the specific objectives relate to the envisaged intermediate results, namely the effect on the skills and knowledge of participants. The evaluation will have to rely on the participants’ own assessment of the extent to which the project has furthered their skills and knowledge in the key areas (knowledge about the EU and other Member States, professional skills and abilities).
- **Operational objectives:** the operational objectives of the project relate to the outputs produced. Indicators relate to the number of applications received and visits facilitated, as well as to the appropriateness of the balance with regard to geographical criteria, gender, media types, etc. Furthermore, each participating journalist will have to define the individual objectives of his or her visit in advance, and will be asked to assess the extent to which these objectives were achieved following the visit.
- **Practical issues:** the practical issues revolve around the management and organisation of the programme. The extent to which participants and host organisations feel that the programme, as well as individual visits, were managed and organised effectively and efficiently will be measured by using post-placement questionnaires.

Evaluation methods and data collection tools

The data to measure progress against the different indicators will be collected through the processes and tools set out in the table below.

⁴⁰ K.U.Leuven – ICRI (lead contractor): Independent Study on Indicators for Media Pluralism in the Member States – Towards a Risk-Based Approach. Leuven, July 2009

Table 6: Proposed data collection tools for the evaluation of the preparatory action

Data collection tool	Timing	Purpose
Initial collection of applicant data	Application stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates general applicant data to assess output indicators. Includes information on operational objectives of individual applicants / visits.
Post-placement questionnaire for participants	To be completed immediately after the termination of the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes questions regarding the management and organisation of the programme in order to assess how successful the programme has been from a practical perspective. Includes questions regarding the general and specific objectives of the programme and revisits the individual objectives stated in the application form. Participants asked to submit articles produced during or as a result of participating in the programme.
Post-placement questionnaire for host organisations	To be completed immediately after the termination of the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions regarding the success of placement from host's point of view and e.g. regarding the extent to which host organisations feel that the visiting journalist was able to contribute to the organisation's work and has added value to their organisation during his or her stay.
Post-placement survey of participants	6 months after placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess longer term impacts of the programme in relation to the general and specific objectives of the programme, e.g. regarding the estimated number of articles on pan-European issues produced since visit that benefitted directly from placement. Questions focus primarily on if and how journalists are able to apply what they have learned during placement in their day-to-day work, rather than on what they have learned.
Case studies	At the end of the test phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the views and opinions of the target group regarding all aspects of the preparatory action. Feedback can then be used to adapt and improve the programme if full programme implementation will be approved.

Evaluation of a possible full programme

The results of the evaluation of the preparatory action are expected to feed into the decision of whether or not a full "Erasmus for journalists" programme will be implemented. If this were to be the case, a future evaluation of a full-scale programme could largely follow the same approach as the evaluation of the preparatory action. As the practical issues and the operational and specific objectives of the test phase would be likely to remain the same for a potential full programme, the evaluation methodology set out above would also be appropriate for the ongoing evaluation of these objectives. However, in particular with a view to the general objectives, the evaluation of a

full-scale programme could include additional methods that are not feasible / proportionate over the short term.

The Commission could consider two possible approaches towards measuring the programme’s final impacts: (1) a large scale media monitoring exercise to measure the extent to which European issues are covered in the national media in the different EU Member States, and (2) a comprehensive online survey on journalists’ professional situation and interest in / knowledge of European affairs.⁴¹ However, it should be noted that even with these methods, measuring the impact of the programme (in terms of its contribution to its general objectives) remains a challenge. While progress towards the creation of a European media sphere could be measured, the attribution of any changes that are observed to the ERASMUS for journalists programme (as opposed to other external factors) will almost certainly not be possible in an exhaustive and methodologically robust way. Please refer to annex B4 for more details on the tools that could be used and their limitations.

5.4 Cost estimate

The European Parliament has proposed a budget of EUR 600,000 for the preparatory action to be included in the EU’s budget for 2011. Although the final decision is still pending, this amount has been used for the budgetary estimates below, which focus on the costs of the different elements of the test phase. There are three main elements to consider:

1. Funds disbursed directly to participants
2. Ongoing project management cost (including reviewing applications, liaising with and reporting to the EC, etc.)
3. Project start-up costs (including the initial wave of communication)

The next sections discuss each main cost factor in turn, and provide an estimate of the likely costs. The figures presented are based on the contractors’ own experience, the data that is available for various similar programmes, and, where available, preliminary quotes from relevant service providers.

5.4.1 Participants’ travel and subsistence expenses

As noted in section 5.3.3 above, the programme should cover participants’ travel and subsistence costs at a level similar to the Lifelong Learning programme, which provides an effective and appropriate system to calculate amounts based on the length of the stay abroad and the cost of living in the different Member States. It is proposed that these same rates are used, but that travel is considered to be included in the subsistence rates (both in order to reduce bureaucracy and to incentivise participants to find inexpensive ways to travel). Applying these rates, the funds available to participants would range from a minimum of EUR 1,176 (for a two-week visit to a

⁴¹ A media monitoring exercise and a survey targeted at the journalist population of Europe were carried out under Part 2 of the Feasibility Study (Statistical Review). The data generated could be used as a baseline for the results of any comparable exercises in the future.

media outlet in Bulgaria) to a maximum of EUR 2,890 (for a six-week visit to a media outlet in Denmark).

In order to estimate the average funding per visit, one can assume an average duration of four weeks per visit, and apply an average subsistence rate. The average rate weighted by the size of each Member State's population is EUR 1,785 for the first two weeks, and EUR 204 for each additional week. Using this rate would imply that the number of visits to each country is expected to depend purely on its size (i.e. a larger number of visits to large Member States, and, for example, a similar number of visits to Poland and Spain). However, it seems very likely that the demand would be higher for some Member States than for others, especially considering the issue of language. It is expected that a relatively higher number of visits will take place to Member States with relatively widely-spoken languages (in particular English, German, French and Spanish⁴²). The countries where one of these is an official language (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Ireland, Spain and the UK) tend to be among the more 'expensive', and the average cost per visit should therefore be corrected upwards. The median of the rates for the aforementioned nine countries is EUR 1,862 for the first two weeks, and EUR 213 for each additional week, resulting in a total of EUR 2,288 for a four-week visit. For the purpose of the budgetary estimates, this is rounded up to an average cost per visit of EUR 2,300.

5.4.2 Ongoing project management costs

There is a continuous cost for running and administering the preparatory action for the intermediary organisation. Parts of these costs (for reviewing and processing applications, disbursing funding and ensuring effective follow-up) are dependent on the number of applications received and the number of visits implemented. Other costs (for programme monitoring and reporting, liaison with the EC and stakeholders) will be incurred on a regular basis irrespectively of the number of applications and visits.

The approximate time that will be spent on administrative procedures directly related to the visits is estimated at 0.75 person-days per visit (see the table below). This is based on the experience of similar programmes run by the European Journalism Centre and other institutions. An indicative cost per person-day of EUR 500 is used, reflecting a mix of more experienced project management staff and project assistants.

Table 7: Estimate of cost of administrative procedures directly related to visits

Activity	Estimated time per visit	Unit cost (EUR)	Cost per visit (EUR)
Filing and reviewing applications, seeking clarification where necessary, judging their eligibility	0.25 person-days	500	125
Informing applicants, transmitting necessary documentation, disbursing the funds	0.25 person-days	500	125
Reviewing and filing information after the completion of the visits	0.25 person-days	500	125
Total cost of administrative procedures per visit			375

⁴² Special Eurobarometer 237, Sep. 2005. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_237.en.pdf

In addition, managing the preparatory action will bring with it not insignificant duties in terms of liaising with and reporting to the EC, as well as contact with stakeholders and (potential) project participants, providing support and answering their questions. This is largely independent of the process of administering individual applications and visits. It is estimated that on average, at least 5 person-days per month will have to be earmarked for contact with and reporting to the European Commission. Another 5 person-days per month will be required to liaise with stakeholders, provide information on demand and answer questions, etc.

Table 8: Estimate of ongoing project management cost

Activity	Estimated time per month	Unit cost (EUR)	Total cost per month (EUR)
Contact with and reporting to the EC	5 person-days	500	2,500
Liaison with and information to stakeholders	5 person-days	500	2,500
Total ongoing project management cost per month			5,000

5.4.3 Project set-up and initial communication

Apart from the running costs that will be incurred periodically, there will have to be a significant initial investment of time to launch the project, develop the required documentation, forms, processes and tools for collecting and processing information, training (and possibly recruiting) staff, etc. For a project of this scope, the estimated effort required is at least 40 person-days (estimated based on the experience of similar programmes and the EJC’s experience with the framework contract for providing seminars for journalists).

Table 9: Estimate of project set-up cost

Activity	Estimated time	Unit cost (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
General staff familiarisation	6 person-days	500	3,000
Prepare and hold initial meetings with the EC	6 person-days	500	3,000
Finalise project documentation (forms)	5 person-days	500	2,500
Set up and test data storage and processing systems	10 person-days	500	5,000
Staff training / recruitment	10 person-days	500	5,000
Develop reporting templates and schedule	3 person-days	500	1,500
Total project set-up cost			20,000

Further to this, the initial wave of communication activities to raise awareness and disseminate information about the project will have to be taken into account. The total estimated cost of the

information and communication tools and activities as outlined in section 5.3.4 is EUR 35,000. These costs relate to the programme website and the promotional leaflet, further details on which are presented below.

The leaflet will likely require the intermediary organisation to commission the design and printing of the leaflet to an external subcontractor. There are also other costs involved in translating and posting the leaflet to stakeholders. The table below offers indicative amounts associated with these activities (based on typical daily fee rates of Brussels-based specialised I&C service providers).

Table 10: Estimated cost of promotional leaflet

Task / activity	Units	Unit costs (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Leaflet design	2 person-days	800	1,600
Leaflet translation	21 languages	400	8,400
Leaflet printing	2,000 copies	1	2,000
Postage	1,500 copies	0.50	750
Total subcontractor costs			15,400

Setting up, maintaining and hosting the website and database will be the responsibility of the intermediary organisation. It is foreseen that the intermediary organisation will need to subcontract the original design and setup of the website and database. However, by employing a CMS (Content Management System⁴³), staff at the intermediary organisation will be able to update and manage the site without external assistance. The table below summarises the activities that will need to be carried out for the website and database by external subcontractors. The homepage of the website should be translated into all EU languages. In addition to this, the IO can expect to spend approximately two days per month to update the site.

Table 11: Estimated cost of project website

Task / activity	Units	Unit costs (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Website design	7.5 person-days	800	6,000
Website implementation	7.5 person-days	800	6,000
Website tutorial	2 person-days	800	1,600
Website maintenance	2 person-days	800	1,600
Website hosting	1 year	200	200
Translation of homepage	21 languages	200	4,200
Total subcontractor costs			19,600

⁴³ CMS allows content to be uploaded without advanced knowledge of html or other web coding systems.

5.4.4 Total costs of preparatory action

Based on the parameters outlined above, one can provide a rough estimate of the number of visits that the test phase of the preparatory action will be able to fund over a period of twelve months with a total budget of EUR 600,000.

As shown in the table below, the fixed costs (related to project set-up, initial communication and ongoing project management) will amount to a total of approximately EUR 115,000. This means that an estimated EUR 485,000 will be available to fund journalists’ visits to media outlets in other Member States. The average funding disbursed directly to participants will be EUR 2,300 per visit. Added to that, each visit will incur an estimated EUR 375 of administrative cost. Based on these estimates, the test phase will be in a position to fund approximately 180 visits during the first year of its existence. This would mean that just under 70% of the total budget for year 1 of the test phase will be disbursed to participants, while the remaining 30% would be used to cover the cost of running and managing the project. In the event that funding will be available to the preparatory action beyond the first year,⁴⁴ the percentage of the budget that is disbursed to participants can be expected to rise, as the initial communication and project set-up costs would no longer be incurred in ensuing years.

Table 12: Estimate of total costs for the preparatory action in year 1

Cost factor	Number of visits	Cost per visit (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Funding disbursed directly to participants	180	2,300	414,000
Variable administrative cost	180	375	67,500
Project set-up	N/A (fixed costs)		20,000
Initial communication			35,000
Ongoing management costs (12 months)			60,000
Total cost			596,500
<i>Percentage of funds disbursed to participants</i>			<i>69%</i>

Please note that the cost in terms of human resources for the EC (for the tender process, liaison with and providing guidance for the intermediary organisation, press conference, contract management, and eventual evaluation of the preparatory action) is not included in any of the above estimates.

5.4.5 Scenarios for a potential full-scale programme

Following the implementation of the test phase, the EU institutions will have to take a decision on whether the initiative should be continued in the form of a full-scale programme. If this were to be the case, different scenarios can be envisaged as regards the budget of such a programme, depending on the envisaged level of ambition.

⁴⁴ Under the applicable financial regulations, a Preparatory Action can run for up to three years, after which it needs to be either discontinued or converted into a regular programme with a firm legal basis.

As the estimates in the previous section have shown, the average direct cost (i.e. the amount of funding disbursed as financial support directly to participants) is expected to be approximately EUR 2,300. For the first year of the test phase, approximately EUR 0.44 of project management and administration costs will be incurred for each Euro disbursed. As noted above, it is expected that in an established programme, the ratio of funds disbursed to management costs will be more favourable, as processes and tools are already in place, and promotion and awareness-raising become less important. If one factors project set-up and initial communication out of the cost estimates for the preparatory action, the management costs drop to approximately EUR 0.30 per Euro of financial support to participants.

Background research into similar programmes (see annex A1) suggests that this is roughly in line with the cost structure of other journalist exchange initiatives. In most cases, project management and overhead costs account for around 25% of the total budget. The scenarios below are calculated based on this ratio, i.e. the assumption that for each Euro spent on financial support to journalists, EUR 0.33 of project management costs will be incurred. It should be noted that for larger-scale programmes (i.e. those with a high number of visits), these are conservative estimates; economies of scale may bring the project management cost down further. However, given the uncertainties surrounding the process that will be applied (including e.g. the possibility that applications may have to be reviewed individually by a selection committee), it seems most sensible to stick to these conservative ratios at this point.

Table 13: Scenarios for total annual costs of a full scale programme

Cost factor	Cost per visit (EUR)	Cost (EUR) for n visits			
		100 visits	500 visits	1,000 visits	2,500 visits
Financial support to participants	2,300	230,000	1,150,000	2,300,000	5,750,000
Project management cost	760	76,000	380,000	760,000	1,900,000
Total cost		306,000	1,530,000	3,060,000	7,650,000

The optimal size of the programme (in terms of the number of visits financed per year) depends on the desired impact, i.e. the number of exchanges in relation to the overall target population. The original ERASMUS programme for students currently supports approximately 1% of the total EU university student population each year.⁴⁵ The best available estimate of the total number of journalists in the EU is around 250,000.⁴⁶ Thus, reaching 1% of all journalists each year would require 2,500 visits, at an estimated cost of EUR 7.65 million per year. However, such high volumes appear unrealistic, at least in the short term, considering inter alia that it took the ERASMUS for university students programme 30 years to achieve a similar penetration rate, and the fact that the typical student only spends four to five years at university, whereas most journalists exercise their profession for life.

An ambitious yet at the same time realistic objective would be for a full-scale ERASMUS for journalists programme to provide between 2% and 3% of all journalists in the EU with the opportunity to visit and work for a media outlet in another Member State *during the first ten years of the programme's existence*. This would require financing between 500 and 750 visits each year,

⁴⁵ Based on Eurostat data from 2007; see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/graph1.pdf>

⁴⁶ This estimate is based on a complex triangulation of sources including data from trade unions (especially the EFJ) and industry associations (and notably, for newspapers, the World Press Trend database). For more details, please see the forthcoming report for Part 2 of this assignment (Statistical Review).

at an approximate annual cost of between EUR 1.5 million and EUR 2.3 million (to be adjusted for inflation in future years).

5.5 Key risks

A number of key risks and critical conditions for the programme’s success were identified based on the analysis of the intervention logic (see section 3.3). The fieldwork has generally confirmed that these risks exist, and has also provided the study team with a better understanding of their severity, potential implications, and possible ways of addressing them. To the extent possible, the implementation scheme proposed in this report attempts to mitigate these risks.

The table overleaf provides a register of key risks to the success of the test phase of the preparatory action (and eventually the full programme) that have been identified, and provides an indication of their likelihood and potential impact. It also outlines if and how the proposed implementation scheme mitigates these risks. Based on the probability, severity of the potential impact, and extent to which it can be mitigated, risks are categorised into green, amber and red risks, to identify those that require the most careful consideration during the ensuing stages of the study and the eventual design and implementation of the test phase.

Table 14: Overview of key risks

Ref.	Risk Category	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Mitigation	Risk Ranking ⁴⁷
1	General response to programme	Insufficient level of interest among journalists to participate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of applications Inability to disburse all available funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility to link mobility to a concrete journalistic interest or project Robust promotional strategy among journalists and relevant organisations 	
2	General response to programme	Insufficient level of interest among media outlets to host journalists	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of potential hosts sign up to database Demand for placements not met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional activities geared towards editors specifically Possibility to link mobility to a concrete journalistic interest or project Editors given possibility to vet journalists in advance Duration of visit tailored to individual needs Journalists encouraged to contact potential hosts directly, rather than relying on fledgling database 	
3	General response to programme	Media organisations not willing to let their staff participate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of applications Disproportionate number of applications from journalists who are de facto unemployed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional activities geared towards editors specifically Possibility to link mobility to a concrete journalistic interest or project Duration of visits tailored to individual needs 	
4	Needs and interests of journalists	Disproportionate interest in large, prestigious media outlets	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such media outlets are flooded with requests for placements Smaller media unable to benefit from hosting journalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme designed to encourage reciprocal visits Journalists seeking a placement at an oversubscribed media outlet encouraged to contact another organisation 	

⁴⁷ Green: Low rank risk, Amber: Medium rank risk, Red: High rank risk. Risk rankings are based on the probability of the risk being realised and its potential impact, as well as the extent to which the proposed implementation scheme is able to mitigate the risk.

Ref.	Risk Category	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Mitigation	Risk Ranking ⁴⁷
5	Needs and interests of journalists	Disproportionate interest in larger, more advanced countries with widely spoken languages	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media outlets in such countries flooded with requests for placements Media outlets in smaller Member States with less widely spoken languages not able to benefit from hosting journalists Movement of journalists not geographically balanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits to any one country capped at 20% of total number of visits Individually tailored visits to facilitate placements with media in smaller Member States even without knowledge of host country's language 	
6	Skills and abilities of journalists	Participants' foreign language skills not sufficient to work as fully-fledged journalists in other Member States	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editors not willing to host journalists without sufficient language skills Expectations not met for hosting organisations, participating journalists and / or sending organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosts given chance to vet journalists before agreeing to visit, if necessary testing language skills Objectives and expected tasks agreed in advance of visit to ensure expectations are met Participants provided with adequate guidance and mentoring at host organisation 	
7	Skills and abilities of journalists	Mismatch between hosts' and participants' expectations of the visit	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit not useful for journalists and / or editors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives and expected tasks agreed in advance of visit to ensure expectations are met Participants provided with adequate guidance and mentoring at host organisation Participants required to have at least two years of work experience 	
8	Administration	Excessive bureaucratic requirements to participate in the programme too burdensome	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time from application to approval not in line with needs of journalistic profession Disincentive for potential host media outlets and journalists to participate in the programme Frustration among participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible and timely administrative framework for approving applications and dispersing grants Lump sum payment (without directly reimbursable expenses) to facilitate disbursement of grants 	

Ref.	Risk Category	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Mitigation	Risk Ranking ⁴⁷
9	Promotion	Failure to raise sufficient awareness for the programme among members of the target group	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of applications Number of visits / exchanges taking place remains low Low number of potential hosts sign up to database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust promotional strategy among journalists and relevant organisations 	
10	Promotion	Participants publishing articles that are critical towards the EU	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative reputational impact for the EU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None (given that programme would not seek to influence participants' work) Programme unlikely to make participants more negative towards the EU than they are 	
11	Promotion	Programme receives bad press (e.g. EC wastes taxpayers' money and/or seeks to 'buy' journalists' good will)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative reputational impact for the programme and the EU Decrease in number of applications Politically impossible to continue programme funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust communication strategy highlighting benefits of programme Programme designed so that the risk of it being perceived as 'propaganda' is low 	
12	Abuse of programme	Journalists / media use programme to finance visits that are not in line with the programme objectives	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU funding wasted on activities that have no impact on coverage of transnational or EU affairs Reputational risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement to specify objectives of visit as part of application form Agreement of host organisation required Requirement of submitting a report after the visit Minimum programme duration set at 2 weeks 	