

## UK Conflict Stability and Security Fund Central Asia

### Project Form

#### Summary

**Implementing organisation:**

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**Country/countries covered:**

*Project target provinces (oblasts) and countries:*

- Kyrgyzstan
- Kazakhstan
- Uzbekistan
- Turkmenistan
- Tajikistan

**Project title:**

Promoting media plurality, balance and media literacy in Central Asia

**Total cost to CSSF:**

£ 399,998

**Duration:**

04/2017 to 03/2018  
 Plus possible three-month extension to June 2018

**Lead department:**

FCO

**Date submitted:**

15/03/2017

**CSSF Central Asia programme impact** (*applies to all projects*):

A region that is more stable, open and able to withstand undue external pressures, with improved governance and rule of law structures.

**National Security Council (NSC) Central Asia Strategy 2015-2020 pillars the project contributes to** (*please check the relevant box – both may apply*):

<b>Resilience:</b> reduced vulnerability to intra-regional and external tensions, and wider external threats	X
<b>Reform:</b> Strengthened and reformed internal structures leading to better governance and rule of law	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Part One: Strategic Case

### *Why are we carrying out the project: context, aims and background*

#### 1.1 Project impact:

Space created in the selected Central Asian Republics for alternative viewpoints and resilience built to external disinformation, by improving audiences' choice and access to reliable information in the Russian language.

#### 1.2 Project outcome:

Increased capacity of selected media to draw and check information from multiple sources and of selected local institutions to deliver media literacy programmes encouraging critical thinking in Central Asia.

#### 1.3 Project outputs:

1. Journalists in Central Asia gain and apply the skills to draw information from multiple sources and check the veracity of these sources through both formal and informal channels.
2. Local institutions gain the capacity to deliver media literacy programmes which encourage critical thinking and promote an understanding of the role and responsibilities of media in a democratic society.

#### 1.4 Theory of change (*maximum 200 words*):

To increase resilience of Central Asian populations to external disinformation and help them make informed decisions, more credible content and a heightened awareness of agenda-driven narratives by audiences is needed.

If journalists and editors gain and apply the skills to draw information from multiple sources and check the veracity of these sources through both formal and informal channels, then they will be better able to provide their audiences with greater access to credible and reliable information in the Russian language.

If local institutions gain and are encouraged to utilise the capacity to deliver media literacy training programmes which encourage critical thinking and promote an understanding of the role and responsibilities of media in a democratic society, then they will be able to help audiences recognise agenda-driven narratives and consider multiple viewpoints

These two outputs will combine to increase the resilience of Central Asian populations to external disinformation and help them make informed decisions.

#### 1.5 Background (*maximum 1000 words*):

In October 2016, Albany Associates in partnership with IREX Europe submitted a proposal under the CSSF call for "Promoting Media Plurality and Balance in Central Asia". The project comprised a set of innovative, mutually supporting interventions designed to give audiences in Central Asia better access to reliable information; greater insight into the local media landscape; and credible alternatives to tendentious Russian-language programming.

Since the initial submission and following discussions with the FCO and the Embassies in the region, Albany has shifted the project's emphasis to two of the proposed deliverables, namely 1) recognising and tackling the growing threat of misinformation and fake news in the region, and 2) creating robust media literacy initiatives for local populations. These two outputs will be delivered

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over a 12-month period with the option of a three-month extension. Given the political risks of working in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the bulk of the activities will be delivered in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

### Media landscape

With the exception of Kyrgyzstan, the Central Asian republics continue to languish at the bottom of world press freedom leagues (e.g. Reporters Without Borders) whilst their leaders remain apparently impervious to international criticism. The authorities have often used national security as an excuse for cracking down on free speech and independent journalism. Blocking Internet sites is a common measure for “protecting” citizens from outside influences whilst outspoken journalists have been threatened, imprisoned and, in many cases, forced to flee abroad.

Consequently, journalists in all five countries practise self-censorship to a greater or lesser degree whilst the culture of investigative journalism is almost non-existent. “Parquet” or “protocol” reporting is widespread with journalists drawing all their information from press releases or press conferences without seeking additional sources. Coverage of international events is generally poor. Media practitioners often plagiarise Russian-language media and knowledge of the conflict in Ukraine, for example, is entirely based on the Russian version of events.

As a result of state-sponsored repression and the parlous state of the industry, there is a lack of critical information and a predominance of light entertainments programming across the region (particularly in Uzbekistan). Audiences gravitate towards foreign channels (particularly Russian) which provide better-quality outputs and an element of escapism. Levels of media literacy are universally low with audiences choosing to believe what they want to believe and having little awareness of the role or responsibilities of the media in a democratic society.

The media sector in Kazakhstan has been hard hit by the economic downturn and the sharp devaluation of the tenge. Advertising has declined by a third and many outlets (particularly Russian-language publications) have been forced to shut down. In addition, the escalation of conflicts worldwide has prompted the Kazakh authorities to introduce new legislation which tightens controls over freedom of speech and promotes an atmosphere of fear within the media sector. Public media limit themselves to praising the authorities whilst issues relating to national security, public protests, the President’s family and the conflict between Ukraine and Russia are virtually taboo.

In neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, the situation regarding freedom of speech is significantly better – although the republic is reliant on Kazakhstan for its Internet connection and, therefore, has no access to websites blocked by Astana. News programming dominates broadcast media and, whilst standards are generally high, journalists tend to avoid topics such as inter-ethnic conflict, radicalisation and youth disaffection. Also, Kyrgyzstan’s entry into the Eurasian Economic Union has initiated a process of legislative harmonisation with Russia and draft laws aimed at banning “gay propaganda” and placing severe limitations on NGO activity mirror their Russian models. International news bulletins draw heavily on Russian sources, largely because of language barriers and budgetary constraints.

The death of Uzbekistan’s hard-line president, Islam Karimov, in September 2016 has yet to impact on media freedoms in the republic but it seems unlikely that his successor, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, will roll back the intense censorship and repression which have dominated the media sector since the Andijan massacre of 2005. Internet remains the least controlled medium and Uzbek audiences access blocked sites through social media and proxy servers. There is, however, an unofficial ban on the retransmission of foreign broadcasters – including some Russian channels. Journalists have to be careful when taking material from foreign websites but, nevertheless, popular websites such as Kun.uz and Daryo.uz translate articles from Russian and republish them as their own.

The media environment in Turkmenistan remains one of the bleakest in the world. All media is state-owned and all information is channelled through the state-owned news agency, Turkmen Dowlet Habarlary. The majority of programmes are devoted to praising President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov and his achievements. Key social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) are often blocked and, according to Privacy International, Turkmenistan has purchased sophisticated surveillance technology to monitor the activities (including Skype conversations) of journalists living both inside the country and abroad. Like their Uzbek counterparts, Turkmen

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journalists will not take part in internationally-funded projects unless they have official permission to do so.

### Background on proposed interventions

Given the high levels of scrutiny and control which characterise the broadcast sector in Central Asia, the project will focus on selected print and online media. Web-based outlets in particular enjoy a greater degree of editorial freedom, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, whilst both newspapers and websites are generally run by small teams who have greater flexibility to change their working practices and introduce new policies in a relatively short period of time.

The project's journalism training programme is based on successful interventions in Ukraine and Moldova which have encouraged media professionals and citizen journalists to adopt a more questioning attitude to source material. In the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea and the onset of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, a group of Ukrainian academics and journalists established [www.stopfake.org](http://www.stopfake.org) which aims to debunk disinformation and counter propaganda emanating from Kremlin-sponsored media outlets. StopFake has built up a significant following across the former Soviet Union (including Russia) and publishes credible exposés of deliberate fabrications on a daily basis. The programme has inspired StopFals in Moldova, a 24-month media campaign which seeks to inform citizens about misinformation and to help them identify the false information disseminated by the media and through social websites.

The media literacy programme will be based on a training manual and methodology pioneered by an IREX Europe project in Moldova entitled "Strengthening Independent Media and Media Literacy" and funded by the US State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and by IREX Europe's network partner IREX, in Ukraine. The approach is centred around disseminating the programme in collaboration with local stakeholder institutions and a range of local library associations where applicable.

### 1.6 Sub-implementing organisation(s):

Albany's key implementing partner is **IREX Europe**, a non-profit, non-governmental organization providing innovative programs to improve the quality of education; strengthen independent media; foster pluralistic civil society development; and reduce conflict. The IREX Europe approach emphasises partnerships with local development organizations to expand capacity, build sustainable institutions and affect change through training, partnerships, education, research and grant programmes. IREX Europe has previous experience of UK FCO funding having successfully run programmes in Kenya, Somalia, Bangladesh and Indonesia. The projects focused strongly on using drama for conflict transformation and other interactive theatre techniques aimed at promoting critical thinking and reducing the likelihood of target groups joining armed groups.

The project will be supported by and implemented in partnership with local organisations, strengthening the credibility and sustainability of its proposed activities. These partners comprise Internews Kazakhstan, Media Development Center and the American University of Central Asia. The programme will leverage their local networks and partnerships in order to enhance the reach and effectiveness of the planned interventions.

Contact details of the sub-implementing organisations are given below:

#### **IREX Europe**

Address: 11 Rue Aimé Collomb, 69003 Lyon, France

Telephone: +33 9 80 52 78 29

Email: [mdevilliers@irexeurope.eu](mailto:mdevilliers@irexeurope.eu)

Website: <http://irex-europe.fr/>

Contact person: Mike de Villiers, Director of IREX Europe

*IREX Europe will lead on the media literacy programme and provide international expertise for the journalism training activities.*

#### **Media Development Center**

Address: Erkindik Blv., 35-9, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Telephone: (996 312) 663006

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Email: [nurgul@medialaw.kg](mailto:nurgul@medialaw.kg)

Website: [www.medialaw.kg](http://www.medialaw.kg)

Contact person: Nurgul Abdykerimova, Director of Media Development Center

*The Media Development Center will coordinate all training and networking activities in Kyrgyzstan.*

### **Internews Kazakhstan**

Address: 76A Mametovoi Street Almaty 050004, Kazakhstan

Telephone: (+ 7 727) 2704130

Email: [oleg@internews.kz](mailto:oleg@internews.kz)

Website: <http://www.internews.kz>

Contact person: Oleg Katsiyev, Director of Internews Kazakhstan

*Internews will coordinate all training and networking activities in Kazakhstan.*

### **American University of Central Asia**, Department of Journalism and Mass Communications

Address: American University of Central Asia, 7/6 Aaly Tokombaev Street, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic 720000

Telephone: +996 (312) 915000 + 437 (Ext.)

Email: [turdubaeva\\_e@auca.kg](mailto:turdubaeva_e@auca.kg)

Website: <https://www.auca.kg/>

Contact person: Elira Turdubaeva, PhD

*The American University of Central Asia will act as the main local partner for the media literacy programme, providing expertise to develop the contact and seeking partnerships with other institutions across the region.*

## 1.7 Project stakeholders:

### *Governments*

On a political level, the change in leadership in Uzbekistan offers an opportunity for renewed engagement with Tashkent. As noted above, there has, as yet, been no sign of a thaw in hardline attitudes to independent media but the new government may be eager to demonstrate a willingness to engage with the international community as it attempts to establish its position on the world stage. The project partners are aware of an increasingly pro-Russian stance in Kyrgyzstan and an unwillingness amongst Kazakh officials to antagonise their powerful northern neighbour. However, there is a growing realisation across the region that media audiences have abandoned local outlets in favour of foreign channels and, consequently, there is an apparent desire to woo them back.

### *Ministries*

Ministries responsible for the media, information and culture across the region are potential interlocutors, since some may be motivated to facilitate rebroadcasting efforts within their countries. Ministries of education are potential partners for the media literacy programme and efforts will be made to secure their support in Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, however it is unlikely that ministries in Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan will want to engage with the project. It may be possible to collaborate with the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights in Turkmenistan which enjoys good relations with some educational establishments in the country and, thanks to the patronage of President Berdymukhammedov, has significant leverage.

### *Civil society sector*

Civil society organisations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are likely to take a keen interest in both components of the project. They will see opportunities to include human rights issues in the media literacy and journalism training programme. They will want to contribute to discussions on social media which are generated by improved content.

*Universities*

Media schools and journalism faculties are important stakeholders which have considerable potential to act as multipliers for both the media literacy and the journalism training programmes. The project consortium will engage with these institutions through the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek. Efforts will additionally be made to actively involve other well-known regional academic institutions such as Manas University and Slavic University in the project deliverables.

*British Embassies*

The project partners recognise the vital role of the British Embassies in the target countries in terms of reinforcing linkages with other international actors and securing the buy-in of government stakeholders. It was notable, for example, that BBC Media Action's long-term intervention in Turkmenistan was only made possible by the good offices of the Embassy in Ashgabat which negotiated approvals from the Turkmen government and assured the project high-level engagement with key stakeholders. Albany will ensure that all Embassies in the region are kept informed of in-country activities and will circulate key documents for review and feedback.

*Other strategic partners*

- OSCE: the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe has offices in the target countries and a keen interest in supporting media freedoms. Albany has already developed a good working relationship with the OSCE and will seek, where possible, to engage local offices in project activities.
- Stop Fake and Stop Fals: these organisations have a strong track record in promoting debunking techniques and training journalists from across the region. The project will tap into this experience and explore ways of adapting it to the Central Asian context.
- UNESCO: in view of its ongoing initiative to develop media literacy programmes for Central Asia, UNESCO is a natural partner for Output 2. The implementation team will ensure the project builds on and extends UNESCO's achievements in this field, thereby avoiding any duplication of efforts.
- Russian-Language News Exchange: established by Free Press Unlimited with funding from the European Commission and the Dutch Government, the RLNE comprises a network of influential outlets which share news reports from across the region. It could act as an important source of credible and impartial information for Central Asian media outlets.
- Free Press for Eastern Europe: based in Prague, this organisation facilitates the day-to-day operations of the RNLE and provides training and other forms of support to network members. Agreements are in place to use Free Press for Eastern Europe as a provider of training and mentoring for beneficiaries from the target countries.

## Part Two: Appraisal Case

*How the project will work theory of change, outcomes, activities, indicators and the risks.*

### Outcome:

Increased capacity of selected media to draw and check information from multiple sources and of selected local institutions to deliver media literacy programmes encouraging critical thinking in C. Asia.

### Outcome Indicators:

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source of information & who will collect
Number of media development organisations and journalists that gain and apply the skills to draw information from multiple sources and check the veracity of these sources through both formal and informal channels – including evidence of content-sharing or exchange. Introduction of editorial procedures for fact verification and responsible sourcing at selected media outlets (online, print, broadcast)	There are currently no media development organisations in Central Asia which offer training in fact-checking or debunking techniques; investigative journalism is taught on an ad hoc basis. Editorial procedures currently do not exist in Central Asia.	By November 2017 eight media organisations have been trained through Training of Trainers programmes and have delivered training to at least 48 local journalists who cover international affairs.  By March 2018 20 senior editors have been trained and are starting to introduce these procedures within their editorial teams.	Records of attendance at ToT workshops: institutional records of beneficiary outlets. Collected by Internews Kazakhstan and the MDC.
Number of institutions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan directly benefiting from the capacity-building programme.	There are currently no institutions in Central Asia which offer media literacy teaching programmes	By March 2018 two institutions in the target countries have acquired related skills and resources. Discussions have been held with potential partners in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. A further two institutions will benefit if an extension is granted until June 2018.	Records of attendance at ToT workshops: institutional records of beneficiary outlets. Collected by Internews Kazakhstan and the MDC.

**Output 1:** Journalists in Central Asia gain the skills to draw information from diverse sources and check the veracity of these sources through both formal and informal channels.

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*Output 1 Activities:*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Expected date</b>
<p><b>1.1. Needs assessment</b></p> <p>At the outset of the project, the partners will implement a far-ranging needs assessment which will act to refine and inform the training activities described below, bringing them in line with beneficiary feedback. The assessment will consider the quality and scope of international news coverage in all four target countries, highlighting in particular the use of Russian-language news platforms as primary sources.</p> <p>The project will also evaluate existing newsgathering and reporting skills through stakeholder interviews in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (both face-to-face and remote) as well as anecdotal evidence from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (through informal contacts with local practitioners). Respondents will include senior editors as well as “coal-face” reporters.</p> <p>Finally, the assessment will explore the potential for building an informal newsgathering network in Central Asia which can facilitate an exchange of material between local outlets and credible Russian-language platforms such as Aru.tv, Hromadske, Delfi and Newsmaker.md. A key partner in this initiative will be the EU-funded Russian-language News Exchange (RNLE), based in Prague and managed by Free Press Unlimited. A needs assessment report, outlining findings and future steps, will be submitted to the CSSF Central Asia programme team. The training program will be adjusted to the findings.</p>	By May 2017
<p><b>1.2. Development of training programme and resources</b></p> <p>Experts will develop a training programme aimed at enhancing critical thinking and fact-checking skills within the Central Asian media community. It will include modules on verifying information, photographs and audiovisual reports by accessing multiple sources and applying due diligence. It will also consider ways of mobilising the growing community of citizen journalists who have the potential to carry out computer-assisted investigations into politically motivated claims and deliver an effective counter-narrative online. Albany will leverage support from local OSCE offices who have a strong track record in this field.</p>	By the end of June 2017
<p><b>1.3. Selecting local organisations</b></p> <p>Albany Associates and IREX Europe will work with Internews Kazakhstan and the Media Development Centre in Bishkek to identify a total of eight organisations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which can act as multipliers and conduits for related training. These beneficiaries will receive a body of training materials and resources as well as a training methodology and bespoke online training platforms (subject to extension granted, see 1.9) which will serve to link practitioners on a regional as well as a national level.</p>	By the end of July 2017
<p><b>1.4. Training of trainers course</b></p> <p>At least two individuals from each organisation will then take part in a Training of Trainers course delivered by specialists in the subject area. Hosted by Internews Kazakhstan, this course will focus on building the skills associated with debunking politically-motivated misinformation and on developing the design and evaluation framework for training workshops. Trainers will learn face-to-face as well as online training techniques.</p>	August 2017
<p><b>1.5. Training workshops for local journalists</b></p> <p>Four workshops will be held in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (two in each country) for at least 48 local journalists covering international affairs. Organised by</p>	September and October 2017

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<p>Internews Kazakhstan and the Media Development Centre, these workshops will provide an opportunity for the local trainers to apply theory to practice and also to assess the buy-in and interest of local media communities. The training content will subsequently be adapted to reflect feedback from workshop participants. The possibility of involving media practitioners from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in this training programme will also be explored. Whilst official invitations are unlikely to be accepted, students from these two countries who are studying journalism in Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan may be motivated to attend.</p>	
<p><b>1.6. Online learning courses</b></p> <p>In addition, an online course capturing the main learning points will enable beneficiaries in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to access the training resources. The e-learning materials will be promoted through social media platforms which remain unblocked in these two countries. The courses will be mentored by the local trainers.</p> <p><u>This activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</u></p>	<p>April 2018 to May 2018</p>
<p><b>1.7. Mentoring for trainees</b></p> <p>After the workshops, each trainee will be invited to produce one report under the mentorship of international experts. These mentors may include editors at the RNLE newsdesk in Prague who have strong links with a range of Russian-language media in the Eastern Partnership countries. The reports will subsequently be offered to these outlets, thereby giving them the opportunity to expand their coverage of the Central Asian region and explore common interests and concerns which link citizens across the former Soviet Union. Content produced and broadcast/published by the project will give all stakeholders the opportunity to evaluate its resonance in the target countries and, therefore, to assess the value of future cooperation.</p>	<p>October 2017 to December 2017</p>
<p><b>1.8. Training workshops for local editors</b></p> <p>The two workshops (one in Kazakhstan and one in Kyrgyzstan) will focus on the challenges of managing international news coverage and leveraging credible sources of information. They will also promote the need to allocate proper resources for fact verification and follow-up. Delivered in collaboration with Free Press for Eastern Europe, the workshops will be organised by Internews Kazakhstan and the Media Development Centre in Bishkek. Each group will comprise 10 senior editors from participating media outlets. Efforts will be made to ensure that trained topics will be used in practice (we will explore the possibility of developing an agreed and co-signed "strategy document" or code of ethics how to combat fake news and misinformation).</p> <p>Eight of these trainees will be invited to take part in a study visit to Prague where they will get the chance to learn from the newsgathering processes developed by the Russian-language News Exchange (RLNE). This experience will help to forge links with this operation and consider how Central Asian coverage could be strengthened by RLNE members. The delegates will also gain an insight into the quality of content and the breadth of coverage common to this network.</p> <p><u>Part of this activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</u></p>	<p>October 2017, January 2018 and April 2018</p>
<p><b>1.9. Networking events for CA journalists</b></p> <p>The study tour participants will be invited to share their experience at two regional events (one in Kazakhstan, one in Kyrgyzstan) aimed at forging links between local media practitioners and Russian-language media based outside Russia. These events will constitute professional discussions between editors</p>	<p>April 2018 and May 2018</p>

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<p>from Central Asia and counterparts in the Eastern Partnership countries. Core topics for conversation will include the challenges of countering Russian propaganda and reducing its influence on local populations. Ways of drawing Uzbek and Turkmen counterparts into this dialogue will be explored, although it is highly unlikely that practitioners from either country will be represented at the events. The impact and outreach of grass-roots initiatives such as “Salam Turkmen” and Centre1.com will be presented by their authors.</p> <p><u>This activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</u></p>	
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*Output 1 Indicators*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target (including date)</b>	<b>Source of information &amp; who will collect</b>
Number of media development organisations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which gain the capacity to deliver related training in the long term (the organisations will be selected during the inception phase).	There are currently no institutions in Central Asia which offer training in fact-checking or debunking techniques; investigative journalism is taught on an ad hoc basis.	By March 2018, a total of eight organisations have incorporated these techniques into their training/educational programmes.	Records of attendance at ToT workshops: institutional records of beneficiary outlets. Collected by Internews and the MDC.
Number of journalists and editors in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan taking part in face-to-face training workshops; number of journalists and editors in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan taking part in online courses. Part of this activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.	Plagiarism and self-censorship are rife in Central Asia; official statements are rarely challenged; coverage of international events is poor and often takes a copy-paste approach.	By March 2018, at least 68 journalists and editors from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been trained and their progress tracked through monitoring and direct interviews. By May 2018 the program is enrolled online and have a reach across all 5 countries.	Attendance records at training workshops; follow-up monitoring and direct interviews. Collected by Internews and the MDC.
Percentage of trained practitioners who apply new-found skills to practice post-training.	Mainstream journalists are not encouraged by editors to think outside the box or to access diverse sources, particularly when covering social or political processes.	By March 2018 of the project, 70% of trainees have submitted examples of fact-checking work conducted in their workplace. A formal approach (strategy document, code of conduct) to put trained topics in practice is agreed.	Follow-up interviews with beneficiaries of training and editors. Collected by Internews and the MDC.
Number of reports produced by trainees which are published/broadcast by Russian-language	As noted above, few Russian-language outlets in the Eastern Partnership countries carry substantial	By May 2018 and following the training workshops and mentoring programme, at least 20 reports from	By March 2018, the first reports are published/broadcast by Russian-language media

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media. Part of activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.	coverage of events or processes in Central Asia.	the target countries are published/broadcast by Russian-language media outside the region.	outside the Central Asian region. By May 2018 and following the training workshops and mentoring programme, at least 20 reports from the target countries are published/broadcast by Russian-language media outside the region.
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**Output 2:** Local institutions gain the capacity to deliver media literacy programmes which encourage critical thinking and promote an understanding of the role and responsibilities of media in a democratic society

*Output 2 Activities*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Expected date</b>
<p><b>2.1. Developing a media literacy curriculum</b></p> <p>Led by IREX Europe working in collaboration with local stakeholder institutions such as the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Manas University, Slavic University, MDC and Internews Kazakhstan, this initiative will be aimed principally at developing a curriculum in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which can be rolled out across the region (on- and offline). The content of these teaching and learning resources will encourage citizens to question agenda-driven content and understand when information is being manipulated for political and/or ideological purposes. They will be based on existing frameworks for media literacy (including those developed by UNESCO) and will draw on best practice from the wider region.</p>	<p>April 2017 to September 2017</p>
<p><b>2.2. Disseminating local language versions of the teaching programme</b></p> <p>Russian, Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen versions of the teaching programme will be made available as an online resource as well as channelled through a network of local institutions. In the first instance, these institutions are likely to include journalism faculties, media development centres, journalism associations and human rights defenders. They will be identified during the inception phase. At a later stage we will widen the reach to include other stakeholders such as youth groups (students, bloggers) and Universities.</p> <p><u>Part of this activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</u></p>	<p>By March 2018 (programme translated and disseminated in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) . By May 2018 programme translated and distributed in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.</p>
<p><b>2.3. Training media literacy teachers</b></p> <p>IREX Europe will deliver an initial set of Training of Trainers courses for stakeholder institutions based in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The courses will draw on IREX Europe's Media Literacy Training Manual which will be adapted to reflect the core elements of the Central Asia media literacy curriculum. This training will promote interactive teaching methods as well as considering ways of institutionalising media literacy programmes and integrating them with existing curricula. Teachers will also be encouraged to source examples of good and bad practice from the local media environment with a view to illustrating core</p>	<p>September 2017 (total of 2 stakeholder institutions trained); April 2018 (total of 4 institutions trained)</p>

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<p>modules.</p> <p><u>Part of this activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</u></p>	
<p><b>2.4 Media literacy pilots</b></p> <p>The teaching curricula will be road-tested through two pilot groups in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which will effectively see trained teachers delivering the programmes in a “live” environment. This process will enable key stakeholders to test out assumptions and encourage feedback from the end beneficiaries. The feedback will be used to enhance the content and consider ways in which the programme could be linked to wider curricula or other educational initiatives.</p> <p>In addition, a pilot study will be commissioned to look at the feasibility of implementing these teaching programmes in Uzbekistan whilst a formal request will be made to the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights in Turkmenistan for permission to present the initiative to stakeholders in Ashgabat and explore the possibilities for local implementation.</p> <p>These efforts will be closely coordinated with UNESCO which has already built up a strong track record in this field across the region. The work described above and ongoing discussions with UNESCO will be captured in a roadmap which will set out proposals for institutionalising the programmes in each country and adapting content to the constraints or opportunities inherent in the local operating environment.</p> <p><u>This activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</u></p>	<p>Initial discussions of the possibility of institutionalising the programme will be held by March 2018.</p> <p>Twp pilot courses delivered in April 2018 and May 2018</p>

*Output 2 Indicators*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target (including date)</b>	<b>Source of information &amp; who will collect</b>
<p>Number of institutions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan directly benefiting from the capacity-building programme.</p>	<p>There are currently no local institutions in Central Asia which offer media literacy teaching programmes.</p>	<p>By March 2018, two institutions in the target countries have acquired related skills and resources. Discussions have been held with potential partners in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan..</p>	<p>Trainer reports, attendance records, media literacy curricula endorsed by beneficiary institutions. Collected by the AUCA.</p>
<p>Number of students participating in media literacy programmes. This activity is contingent on approval to extend the project into FY 2018-19.</p>	<p>The programme has yet to be created. It will complement work being done by UNESCO in Central Asia.</p>	<p>By May 2018 at least 60 students have taken part in two pilot courses in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.</p>	<p>Attendance lists provided by participating institutions. Collected by IREX Europe and the AUCA.</p>
<p>Percentage of participants who rate the media literacy programmes as “good” or “very good” in post-pilot assessments. This activity is contingent on approval to extend the</p>	<p>Few students in Central Asia have had exposure to media literacy programmes and, in general, awareness levels of the role played by media in a</p>	<p>By March 2018 initial preparations for the pilot series are put in place. Initial discussions on programmes institutionalising are being held.</p>	<p>Questionnaires given to students who complete the pilot courses. The results of the pilot studies. Collected by IREX Europe</p>

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project into FY 2018-19.	democratic society are low.		and the AUCA.
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2.6 Risks

Rating	Likelihood	Probability (%)	Impact level				
			Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
5	Almost certain	>90%	5	10	15	20	25
4	High likelihood	75%-90%	4	8	12	16	20
3	Probable	50% - 75%	3	6	9	12	15
2	Low likelihood	25%-50%	2	4	6	8	10
1	Unlikely	0%-25%	1	2	3	4	5

Nature of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Initial Risk Severity Rating	Mitigations	Treated Risk Severity Rating	Risk owner
In setting up the debunking training and initiatives we do not achieve sufficient <b>local credibility and uptake</b> .	3	5	10	We will be engaging experts from Stop-fake and Stop Fals, as well as using the expertise of IREX Europe to ensure that the key principles are conveyed properly. This will thereafter be strengthened though local stakeholders and participants who will strengthen the credibility of our methods. Furthermore, by training the trainers this will be owned by local participants.	6	Albany and downstream partners
Project not extended beyond March 2018	4	4	15	Move crucial for the project activities in Year 1 (April 2017-March 2018). Agree on a decision point (January 2018)	5	Albany and downstream partner
Harassment and / or <b>arrests</b> of the journalists who engage with the project	2	3	6	The journalists will be introduced to the project's educational expertise and encouraged to exclude political or relatively ambiguous content and context in their work as it can become the reason of preventative arrests and other forms of harassment.  We will regularly monitor local risk as per our duty of care policies, and will engage our local partners in the assessment of the risks posed to training participants and adjust participant lists accordingly.	5	Albany
<b>Russian government interference</b> in project activities	3	5	15	The project will observe high standards of digital security for all web-based resources and correspondence between project partners. Social media platforms associated with the project will be carefully moderated in order to minimise the risk of trolling.	4	Albany & IREX Europe

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<b>Bureaucratic obstruction</b> of free media projects	2	4	8	Legal advice and process will be followed from the outset to minimize possible obstruction of the project, particularly through collaboration with local actors familiar with the regulatory environment and British presence in the region. Additionally, we will take the advice of the HMG project manager in Astana as well as the HMG diplomatic representations in the region to enhance the likelihood of limited bureaucratic interference in project activities.	4	Albany & IREX Europe
Limited or absence of media literacy program <b>buy-in</b> by the local educational institutions.	2	4	8	Should limited buy-in or enthusiasm be detected by the project team in relation to the media literacy program on the part of local educational institutions, we will expand the breath of institutions involved and seek to engage with the faculties at a senior level. This will include meetings between Project Director and Departemental Heads of faculties to facilitate renewed buy-in and sense of ownership on behalf of the educational institutions.	4	Albany & IREX Europe
<b>Internal sabotage</b> at media outlets with senior editors using the project for capacity-building purposes but stopping short of implementing any real change	2	6	12	Media outlets will be selected on the basis of their track record in pushing back the editorial boundaries and seeking to embrace best practice. Throughout the project lifecycle, senior editors will benefit from regular engagement with the project team who will involve them directly in developing editorial guidelines, thereby ensuring a strong sense of ownership for the final outputs.	4	Albany and downstream partners
The <b>impact</b> of proposed trainings may achieve weaker effects and traction than desired within our target audience of youth and journalists	3	4	12	Regular M&E and analytics to check progress and remediate as necessary will be carried out in combination with activity testing throughout the project duration to ensure resonance of the taught concepts to the trained practitioners. We will make use of pre- and post-training surveys to enhance the feedback-driven nature of our activities.	4	Albany and downstream partners
Negative change in <b>perception</b> of the UK / FCO	2	2	4	Our partners in the region will be implementing the bulk of activities. Thus, we mitigate any negative changes in perception of the funder by ensuring that our content, trainings and activities are locally owned and driven. Additionally, to ensure local relevance of our proposed activities, all core project staff has experience in the region and speak at least one of the local languages.	3	Albany
Limited <b>buy-in</b> of our media coverage and media organizations are not supportive of our training courses	2	3	6	The trainings conducted as part of the ToT by our partners will be built on experiences from Moldova and Ukraine, and our trainers will all have regional experience. We may bring trained trainers from Moldova and or Ukraine to bear witness to the success of the programmes in their countries.	2	Albany and downstream partners

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There is limited participation and traction of produced content amongst <b>women</b>	2	3	6	Gender-sensitive programming has been a consideration in our program design. In the trainings, we will mitigate any low traction by ensuring that women are invited and encouraged to take part. Additionally, Albany will provide guidance to downstream partner organisations on gender sensitivity that will be mainstreamed through project.	2	Albany and downstream partners
Potential breakdown of <b>key relationships</b>	2	2	4	This is possible in high-tension environments such as this. Mitigation consists of early treatment of personality clashes, regular and open team meetings, and clear lines of reporting and equitable HR practices. Backed up by alternative recruitment strategies.	1	Albany and downstream partners

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### 2.7 Why we should still go ahead if this is a high risk project (*maximum 150 words*):

This is not a high risk project.

### 2.8 Sustainability (*maximum 150 words*):

The project is primarily geared towards developing sustainable outputs which will enrich the local media landscape and demonstrate that there are viable mechanisms for addressing social issues and reaching a wide audience. By using local resources and organizations, we are strengthening the ability of our partners to implement similar work in the future. This will be further enhanced by training the trainers, to achieve multiplier effect across – and beyond – the project duration.

### 2.9 Conflict sensitivity (*maximum 150 words*):

The project partners and their local affiliates recognise the considerable challenges of operating in Central Asia and activities will reflect a strict Duty of Care policy towards local contributors and beneficiaries (particularly in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan). The project is primarily geared towards developing sustainable outputs which will enrich the local media landscape and demonstrate that there are viable mechanisms for addressing social issues and reaching a wide audience.

### 2.10 Gender appraisal (*maximum 150 words*):

Gender-sensitive programming has been a consideration in our program design. In the training workshops, we will mitigate any low traction by ensuring that women are invited and encouraged to take part. Additionally, Albany will provide guidance to downstream partner organizations on gender sensitivity that will be mainstreamed through project.

We have rated our [Gender Equality Marker](#) as **Significant** (marked 1), as we see gender equality as an important objective in this project. This we take to mean that gender equality is an important, but secondary objective in our activities.

### 2.11 Human rights appraisal (*maximum 150 words*):

In the proposed countries of engagement, there are known instances of unlawful interference with the democratic rights of freedom of expression. Although this will not be a core focus of our activities, we are aware of the impact these types of official actions will have on our planned activities. As part of our risk assessment, we have taken the human rights considerations and limitations into account.

We appreciate the sensitivities surrounding the suggested project activities, particularly relating to the safety of our participants. We will encourage training participants to only partake in project activities if they are fully aware, and comfortable, with the security and political risks posed. Specifically with relation to participants from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, we aim to engage them remotely via online channels, explore partnerships with entities that are currently on the ground to enhance their MIL offering, e.g. UNESCO's work in CA, and restrict invitations to events to students currently residing in either Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan.

## Part Three: Commercial Case

*To ensure that the department meets its legal obligations in terms of procurement and contracts*

**3.1: Which of the Departments' procurement and contracting regulations will be used?**

FCO

**3.2 Contracts: will the project implementers have a commercial contract, MOU or an accountable grant?**

*Commercial contract – call off from CSSF suppliers framework*

**3.3 Procurement: if using a contract, will the project involve a procurement process (Y/N)?**

*Yes – tendered via CSSF suppliers framework*

**3.4 EU regulation: will the process follow EU guidelines (Y/N)?**

*Tendered via CSSF suppliers framework*

**3.5 Templates: has the template being used been shared with implementers? (Y/N)**

*Tendered via CSSF suppliers framework*

## Part Four: Financial Case

**How will the project be funded: who else is financing, budget, multi-year funding and activity costs. An activity based budget must be submitted with the project form, showing activities, their cost, and timings.**

### 4.1 Total cost to the CSSF:

£ 399,998
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### 4.2 Funding breakdown by year:

Project start date: April 2017			
Project end date: March 2018 with a possible three-month extension until June			
2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	2019/20
£ 399,998	£ 124,640 (subject to approval of extension)	£ -	£ -

### 4.3 Other donor funding:

Project start date:				
Project end date:				
Partner contributing:	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Total cost of project:				

### 4.4 ODA (Official Development Assistance)/non-ODA split:

(For details please refer to HMG's [ODA guidance](#))

Total ODA:	£399,998	As a percentage:	100%
Total non-ODA:	£0	As a percentage:	0%

### 4.5 Capital costs (maximum 200 words):

(For details please consult CSSF Central Asia programme team)

No capital costs are anticipated for the implementation of this project.
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### 4.6 Grants (maximum 200 words):

(For details please consult CSSF Central Asia programme team)

Sub-grants shall be awarded as part of this project only in consultation with the CSSF Central Asia programme team.
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## Part Five: Management Case

### *How the project will be run: monitoring, evaluation and human rights*

#### 5.1 Monitoring:

Method	Intervals	Carried out by	Follow up activity
Project update meetings / telecoms between BE Astana . Bishkek and project implementer	Monthly	Implementer	Monthly meeting summaries submitted to HMG project manager.
Progress and finance update	Monthly	Implementer	
Project progress meetings	At least quarterly	Implementer and HMG project manager / CSSF team	Action log and updates to documentation
Visit project activities	At least quarterly	HMG project manager / CSSF team	Updates to HMG stakeholders.
CSSF Annual Review	Annual – May 2018	CSSF team	

#### 5.2 Evaluation:

The M&E programme will comprise an assessment of the take-up and outreach of proposed programme activities. This work will be carried out by Internews Kazakhstan and the Media Development Centre in Bishkek, with oversight from the Project Director and Albany and IREX Europe. The following methods will be used:

- Web analytics and measurement tools built into social media networks will show the number of visitors to key web platforms, their countries of origin and the level/nature of their activity. The project team will be able to assess to what extent educational resources have been accessed and downloaded whilst discussion forums will capture feedback from users.
- Direct interviews with key stakeholders (CSOs, educational establishments) in the target countries will seek to identify the benefits of the project in terms of capacity-building and improved outreach.
- Individuals attending training courses both on- and offline will be invited to complete a questionnaire aimed at assessing satisfaction levels and the wider application of lessons learned.

A project completion report will be produced and shared by Albany within two months of the project finishing.

For training evaluations we follow Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model and use electronic surveys, at Level 1 (Reaction) at the end of each training event and Level 2(Learning) within 3 months of the training event, assessing actual levels of knowledge. Through the feedback received, a detailed post-workshop feedback report will be created for the client at Level 1 and 2 (immediately post-course and 3 months after the training). These evaluations may be applied to any internal evaluation for the client. Based on the surveys before and after the training, we will be able to include insights into areas for further improvement and how to ensure the sustainability of the lessons learnt during the workshop.

The Level 1 and 2 evaluation surveys are conducted either on paper, or preferably electronically. Complementing Level 1 and 2 surveys, a short performance report (half page) will be written on each delegate at the end of training and made available to client. To support the measurement and evaluation component of training, Albany will use the survey results and performance reports to measure the impact of the training confidence, knowledge, practical application and behaviour.

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**5.3 Financial audit:**

External financial audit of the project will be held in the final quarter of the project. An externally audited financial report will be submitted to the CSSF programme team by 30 April 2018.

<b>Name and signature of implementing organisation's lead contact</b>	Anna Staevska
<b>Date</b>	15/03/17