

Introducing the National Fund for Public Interest Media Sierra Leone



The National Fund for Public Interest Media Sierra Leone (NaFPIM) is established to support media houses in Sierra Leone to practise public-interest journalism. NaFPIM will provide this support by awarding, through a highly competitive process, grants to media outlets that demonstrate public-interest media through a proven track record of delivering independent and impartial contents that matter to the people of Sierra Leone.

The concept of a National Fund for Public Interest Media in Sierra Leone stems from the National Action Plan for Media Viability which was agreed with key stakeholders in the wake of the [Sierra Leone National Media Viability and Investment Conference](#) held in April 2022. Recommendations generated by the conference included the following: “Government and development partners should commit to a national fund for public interest media” (Recommendation 6).

In April 2022, the Ministry of Information and Communications and its partners including the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and other national media organisations, such as the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG), with support from the BBC Media Action under the PRIMED project, organized the first ever National Media Viability and Investment Conference. The conference explored ways in which all stakeholders can work together to create a healthier information ecosystem where a steady flow of trusted public interest media contents are more freely and widely available to the people of Sierra Leone. The conference was preceded by regional consultations led by a national consultant with support from an experienced international media-viability professional. The national conference brought together industry actors, local and central government, the private sector, donor and international development partners.



Media stakeholders at the National Media Viability and Investment Conference Photo credit BBC

The Fund's initiative takes its cue from the perception that media in Sierra Leone face tough economic challenges which, in turn, limit their ability to produce contents that serve the public interest. Stakeholders have called for a funding mechanism that could combine government subsidies with contributions from international donors and that could disburse this funding through a transparent and inclusive process.

The Fund is governed by the Multi-Stakeholders Board (MSB) and managed by the MRCG. It has the vision of ensuring that Sierra Leoneans enjoy sustained access to relevant media contents that are free from political or commercial pressures and that enhance civic participation.