

Guidelines for Monitoring the Media

The Federal Board of Revenue



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Introduction

Information is power, and the media plays a variety of important roles in this regards. They report on current events, they provide frameworks for interpretation, they mobilize the citizenry with respect to various matters, they reproduce the predominant culture, and, of course, they entertain. Freedom of expression is a human right and an essential attribute of democracy pursuant to which the media has the right to broadcast, with no prior censorship, information and opinions based on their selection criteria within the framework of respect for certain principles such as accuracy and impartiality. At the same time, one of the fundamental rights of organisations and citizens is the freedom to obtain information through the mass media. This implies that all those who play a role in social, political or economic life like the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) should be able to make their voices heard through the media. For obtaining information from the media, it has to be systematically monitored. Media monitoring is the process of reading, watching or listening to the editorial content of media sources on a continuing basis, and then, identifying, saving and analyzing content that contains specific keywords or topics.

FBR, in view of the nature of their business needs to resort to media monitoring as a tool to identify mentions of their organization and executives in news media. Media monitoring would enable them to track the success of their news releases, get feedback on services they provide, gauge the public impression of their organisation and get feedback on specific issues relevant to the organisation.

In the context of FBR, media monitoring would simply mean to keep track of the media's coverage of FBR and/or news coverage that relates to the organisation's mandate. Consider which medium or media is important to monitor: print, radio, television, blogs, internet and electronic news feeds. By keeping track of the media, it can be ensured that FBR is kept up-to-date with current issues that are aligned with its subject of interest. Take note of what topics reporters or media outlets are covering that relate to FBR or particular issue. This is a key step to being part of the media and community or national "dialogue."

Media monitoring would enable FBR to:

- Gauge public opinion about the services and performance of FBR.
- Public or market reaction to FBR policies and new taxation.
- Public impression on the revenue collection efforts.
- Identify emerging crisis.

General

In order to get a complete picture, FBR will have to undertake media monitoring in the complete spectrum of the media. However following specific activities should be instituted:

1. Monitoring news media and social media: Monitoring editorial content of news sources including newspapers, magazines, journals, TV, radio stations and the internet is by far the most common type of media monitoring. This form of media monitoring is called “news monitoring”.
2. News in traditional media (newspapers, consumer magazines, trade journals, news syndication services) is best monitored on the internet. With rare exceptions, content in print is also published on the web. However, most Pakistan Government agencies still resort to manual monitoring.
3. In addition to monitoring news, FBR should also monitor social media on the internet, tracking word of mouth mentions about their organisation in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, message boards and forums. This is commonly known as social media monitoring, word-of-mouth monitoring, or buzz monitoring.

Media Monitoring Team

If a team does not already exist in FBR, it will have to be set up before media monitoring is undertaken. In order to carry out any media monitoring, one fundamental requisite on which the success or failure of such an initiative depends, is forming the team that will do the day-to-day work of collecting information, analysing it and producing results. The first step is to define how a team of this sort should be structured, who should be included, the profile required for inclusion, as well as distributing responsibilities to each team member.

Following is a table (sample) with the number of persons and functions that could make up a basic monitoring team:

POSITION	PROFILE	FUNCTIONS
Project Coordinator	Communicator, media analyst or journalist with experience in media monitoring	Heads the team and is in charge of training the team, establishing the representative sample, general operational supervision, and producing the report with the analysis of the results. In some cases is also in charge of designing or implementing the strategies for collecting and disseminating the information and results.
Person in Charge	Communicator, media analyst, or journalist	Performs the logistical coordination of the monitoring effort and conducts day- to-day supervision of the work of the monitors. Controls implementation of the methodology for collecting information and the quality of the analysis. Resolves doubts that may arise in the process of working with the coordinator, and organizes the materials analysed.
Monitors	Students of political science, law, sociology, communications, and/or other related field	Select, measure, codify and analyse the news (reading the daily newspapers, watching and listening to the radio and television programmes).
Processor of information and production of reports	Specialist in statistics and IT	Designs the data base (in Excel or another program), supervises data input with the information collected, identifies and sorts out inconsistencies, calculates results, and prepares graphic presentation of the results.

Which Media Outlets Will be Monitored?

Defining the Sample

Once the team has been formed and its responsibilities determined, the next step is to define the daily newspapers, television programmes and radio programmes that will be analysed. Given that in most cases both financial and human resources are limited, one may not necessarily be able to monitor all the daily newspapers and programmes in Pakistan. A representative sample therefore has to be chosen. In doing so, one should take into account that the daily newspapers, television channels and radio stations selected should be media of a national scope and with an open signal (this methodology does not include cable or closed-circuit signals that are paid for); that have the largest audiences or readership.

Once the media outlets have been identified, the formats to be monitored will be as shown below:

Print Media	Television	Radio
All informative news and opinion sections (i.e. editorials, opinion columns and letters)	Main news programmes (may include hybrid formats that incorporate magazine programming*, but programmes that are exclusively magazine, interviews, and/or opinion will not be included). If there are several editions of news programmes in the 24-hour cycle, those with the largest audience should be chosen.	Main news programmes (may include hybrid formats that incorporate magazine programming, but programmes that are exclusively magazine, interviews, and/or opinion will not be included). If there are several editions of news programmes in the 24-hour cycle, those with the largest audience should be chosen.
* A television program that presents a variety of topics, usually on current events, in a format that often includes interviews and commentary.		

Media Monitoring Tools

Press Clipping

Media monitoring through press clipping is still in vogue in many government organisations of Pakistan. Readers scan articles in printed news publications looking for the key words. The readers mark the keywords in news items and articles, cut out the marked news item or article, put the clipped part in folders and circulate these folders to the concerned officers and members of FBR.

To start with, we propose that this procedure be introduced (if it is not in vogue already), however manual scanning by human readers typically misses 30 to 40% of articles containing the key words. Now that the print media has grown in size the percentage error will also go up. The solution is to institute news scanning via the internet as most of the print media is now on the internet or outsource to monitoring agencies.

Tracking Op-Ed

An op-ed (positioned opposite the editorial page) is an opinion piece written by an individual who is not on the newspaper's staff. Op-Eds are also tracked like articles mentioned in the previous paragraph.

TV and Broadcast Monitoring

Monitoring of TV channels and radio stations is very resource extensive and is nowadays outsourced to media monitoring companies. However, institutions like FBR should have a means of monitoring TV prime time transmissions.

Media Monitoring Sheets

The following tools are useful for media monitoring and promoting media relations:

Media Tracking Sheet

Tracking the media can affect your strategy on how you position yourself with the national and international news. This perspective should assist you in forming your communications plan, your key messages and your media strategy. Sample is provided below:

MEDIA TRACKING SHEET						
HEADLINE	DATE	MEDIA	OUTLET	LOCATION	REPORTER/JOURNALIST	SUMMARY

Media Hits Tracking

When FBR is under the media's spotlight, keep track of all media coverage your organisation receives. This should be logged in a separate file from the Media Tracking Sheet. Keep in mind that your story may appear in newspapers or on television stations that did not directly cover your event (This happens when your story is picked up by a news service). Tracking and compiling your media coverage has a number of benefits and uses. Use it to measure the success of your communications strategy and audience you were able to reach. Future media plan can be tailored based on this analysis. Sample is provided below:

MEDIA HITS TRACKING SHEET						
DATE	MEDIA	OUTLET	LOCATION	REPORTER/JOURNALIST	INTERVIEWEE	NOTES

Developing a Media Database or List

After identifying media targets, put together a contact list that includes the names, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of journalists, editors, or news directors who might take a special interest in FBR. The following is a sample media list:

MEDIA DATABASE					
OUTLET	NAME	JOB TITLE	PHONE	EMAIL	FAX
TELEVISION					

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