

Terms of Reference for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Officer

Thomson Media (TM) is seeking to hire an MEL Officer for the project: “Media Innovation Europe 3.0”.

BACKGROUND

Thomson Media supports journalists and media organisations worldwide often in challenging and emerging economies. Our work promotes ethical reporting and ensures independent, trusted sustainable media businesses developments. Thomson currently implements several media support programmes in the regions of Western Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe. The focus of Thomson’s work is to provide guidance to media outlets for sustainable development and operation through business mentorship, testing and implementing new and innovative business modalities, supporting media to attract and engage new and underrepresented media audience(s) including young, female, minority groups and diaspora. Thomson is looking to hire an MEL Officer to become part of the wider Western Balkans and Central and Eastern European team and support implementation of its programmes.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Media Innovation Europe: towards resilient public-interest media ecosystem (MIE 2026-2028) is a two-year programme co-funded by the European Union aiming to provide support to the European newsrooms and individuals through business needs assessments and personalised advisory, grants, training and mentorship to media managers and journalists that work or are building working in and building newsrooms that are moving towards a full digital transition. MIE's overall goal is to empower media outlets to navigate a changing media context, providing tools and guidance to align their journalistic products, business structures, and means of discovery and distribution in an audience-focused and sustainable way. The project is delivered by a consortium led by the Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI) together with the Berlin-based Thomson Media (TM), The Fix Foundation (TFF) and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN).

As part of the project, Thomson Media will implement the following programmes:

a. Ideation – following the open call for support, selected beneficiaries will pass the series of three ideation workshops (September - November 2026). The three main objectives of ideation sessions are to (1) have innovative and articulated ideas, (2) inspire and support out of the box thinking and (3) secure quality and committed candidates for its programs that will ensure impact. Workshops will engage with two types of beneficiaries are (1) new media outlets, journalists or collectives of journalists/media professionals with a start-up plan for a sustainable new media model and (2) experienced media professionals and decision makers in established newsrooms. Selected participants will get familiar with key concepts such as ideation techniques, steps they have to complete to be able to better understand testing and

validation. They further have the chance to brainstorm ideas with facilitator support that they can possibly turn into project proposals and apply for funding from Thomson or other donor organisations. Upon the completion of the series, participants will have three potential trajectories: have a reserved spot in our Validation Booster program (to validate ideas they previously articulated through the workshops), or to take part in networking and collaborative activities and fellowship program, Thomson and its partners plan to organize within this project, or beyond.

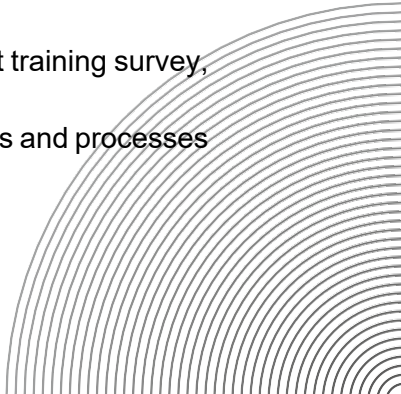
b. Validation Booster (VB) - tailored for smaller media outlets, content producers, journalists, communication/media startups and networks. Validation Booster is structured as a guided program consisting of up to 12 workshops, related resources and tasks designed to help beneficiaries to learn how to validate and test their business idea that imply new digital products/services, diving into the process of rethinking a media's potential and feasibility in the digital environment. The goal is for beneficiaries to be acquainted with the necessary tools, knowledge, and directions to properly understand and implement validation methodology for their business idea. After completing Validation program key beneficiaries will be: a) equipped to present their ideas and mission clearly; b) capable to validate on their own any business idea they may have within their outlet in the future; c) develop materials to present and communicate their validated idea to interested parties and potential funders and d) present their idea, if validated, to broader pool of funders and investors. Besides structured mentorship, beneficiaries will receive funds through grant schemes (up to EUR 3.000) to implement all validation program related tasks. The program will be driven through one cycle (February – June 2027). Up to 12 beneficiaries will be involved in this support stream.

c. Business Innovation Synergizer (BIS) - tailored to support larger media with significant absorption capacities, developed strategic or business plans and/or validated ideas. Media outlets will be supported through grants (EUR 30.000), technical support (1-on-1 mentoring, capacity building). The program will be implemented from January 2027 until December 2027. Only one cycle will be organized, with a defined number of beneficiaries (up to 5 under the Business Innovation Synergizer programme). BIS' overall objective is to improve the business sustainability of professional media and make journalists and media outlets more resilient to any external threat.

The MEL Officer will support the project team to develop and implement functional and efficient monitoring and evaluation systems, to define Key Performance Indicators for main activities, and to extract lessons learned for the sake of adaptability and flexibility of the current and any future project.

SCOPE OF WORK

Main Tasks and Responsibilities

- Supporting program team in setting strategic priorities, and follow implementation of the agreed activities;
 - Setting the basis for key data collection for the purpose of pre and post training survey, ensuring quality assurance and data safety;
 - Coordinate with the team and partners to create data collection systems and processes in line with the requirements and agreed procedures;
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- Oversee the timely development and implementation of the monitoring framework and tools, ensuring that qualitative and consistent information is available on program performance and impact;
- Contributing to communication and outreach activities by providing key lessons and data;
- Regular communication with the program team and project partners to ensure consistency and regular data collection.

Deliverables

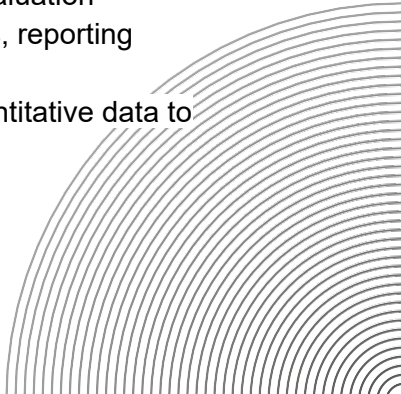
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** A comprehensive document outlining the framework, including KPIs, data collection methods, timelines, and roles and responsibilities;
- **Data Collection Tools:** development and assessment of the monitoring and reporting templates for VB and BIS: mentors (baseline, interim, final and monthly reporting tools) and media (quarterly, interim and final report) and final evaluation survey for beneficiaries within Ideation, VB and BIS programme.
- **Training Surveys:** Summarized findings from pre- and post-training surveys to measure the effectiveness of the training sessions;
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Reports:** Regular reports, after each training, summarizing progress against KPIs, including both quantitative and qualitative data;
- **Final Report:** Comprehensive evaluation report assessing the overall impact and outcomes of the project's activities also capturing lessons learned and recommendations for improving future projects;
- **Data Management System:** A system or platform for collecting, storing, and analysing data, ensuring quality assurance and data safety.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Education: A level of education which corresponds to completed university studies including postgraduate studies or at least 5 years of work experience in the field of in monitoring and evaluation, social sciences, statistics, international development, project management, communications, media studies, or another relevant field.

Language: Fluency in English and at least one of the languages spoken within the Western Balkans.

Professional Experience:

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in monitoring, evaluation, learning (MEL), research, data analysis, project management, media development, international development, or related fields.
 - Proven experience in designing and implementing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including development of indicators, data collection tools, reporting systems, and learning mechanisms.
 - Experience collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data to assess project performance, outcomes, and impact.
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- Experience supporting project teams in results-based management, performance monitoring, and adaptive learning processes.
- Experience preparing evaluation reports, learning documents, case studies, or impact assessments.
- Sound understanding of the media sector, media development programmes, civil society initiatives, or international development projects is considered an asset.
- Experience coordinating surveys, assessments, evaluations, focus groups, interviews, or other research and data collection activities.
- Strong knowledge of MEL methodologies, logical frameworks, theories of change, outcome harvesting, or other results measurement approaches.

Other skills:

- Strong analytical, research, and problem-solving skills with excellent attention to detail.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to present findings and recommendations to diverse audiences.
- Proficiency in data management, analysis, and visualization tools
- Highly organized and capable of managing multiple priorities and deadlines simultaneously.
- Collaborative working style with strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills.
- Proactive, adaptable, and able to respond effectively to changing project needs and priorities.
- Ability to translate data and evidence into actionable learning and programme improvements.

DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

Assignment will commence on June 2026 and will last until May 2028, and it involves a total of 40 consultant days with a daily fee of 250 EUR that will be dispersed and charged monthly through approved TS's and issued invoices.

LOCATION

Remote work covering the Creative Europe countries. Travel per need and planned in advance with the Thomson program team.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates should submit their resume, cover letter and offer to [jobs\(at\)thomsonfoundation.org](mailto:jobs(at)thomsonfoundation.org) by **30.06.2026**.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

These Terms of Reference may be reviewed and amended as needed to meet the evolving needs of the project and organization.

